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BICENTENNIAL









SMYSER FAMILY IN AMERICA

In memory of the last  
member of the Smyser  
family in Ft. Wayne, Ind.,  
Benjamin H. Smyser,  
1888 - 1968.

From  
Henry B. Schmidt family,  
York, Pa. and —  
Edward C. Dolez,  
Ft Wayne, Ind.





*Bicentennial Meeting*

OF

The Smyser Family  
in America

YORK FAIR GROUNDS

*June Twenty-second, Nineteen Hundred and Forty-six*

YORK, PENNSYLVANIA



*Printed for the Association*

THE MAPLE PRESS COMPANY, YORK, PA.

1947



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## INTRODUCTION

**F**OLLOWING the Smyser Centennial in 1845, a small pamphlet embodying the "Minutes" of that celebration was published. A few years later, there was a republication of the pamphlet with additions relating primarily to the Rudisill family. Some years later Mrs. Catherine L. E. Hay republished the pamphlet of 1846. In 1941 the Rudisill reprint was again reissued with further information as to that family. Thus, we have four issues of the pamphlet of a century ago. All of those issues are scarce and even rare.

In 1931 Mrs. Amanda Laucks Xanders published the first serious attempt at a Smyser Genealogy, and as an appendix to that volume, she included a reprint of the 1846 pamphlet. It is again reprinted as Appendix B hereto.

The late Howard S. Musser of York collected a large number of notes relating to the Smyser family. His death prevented the amplification and publication of those notes. The information, however, is now in the possession of Miss Sara E. Smyser and it is hoped that it will ultimately be published.

The present pamphlet is published from a historical rather than from a genealogical standpoint, although certain elusive genealogical data is included.

The pamphlet has been embellished by the drawings prepared by Mrs. Elizabeth Smyser Hessemer, a mem-

ber of the Committee on Publication, and a Smyser descendant on three or more lines.

The Committee does not pretend to determine the proper or even the original spelling of the word "Smyser," nor does it attempt to determine whether the elder of the two male immigrants was "Matthias" or "Mathias." In these respects, we have used the spelling as it appeared in the sources from which we took the information here printed.

Anyone who shall prepare a definitive Smyser genealogy will be met by several problems.

Little is known of the whereabouts of the four Smyser immigrants prior to 1737. In that year a "warrant to commence from the 1st March 1737 per date or time of first settlement or improvement" was issued out of the Land Office; and on June 29, 1743, Thomas Cookson surveyed 150 acres to Mathias Smyser and 138 acres to George Smyser. The cause of the delay, whether either of the warrantees occupied the lands in 1743, and the precise location of the lands and their subsequent course of conveyance has not been ascertained.

It has not been ascertained why Matthias was married in Lebanon. Whether he lived there at the time, or whether he went to Lebanon merely to marry Miss Koppenhoefer, we do not know.

(John) George Smyser was thought to have emigrated to the West. It has now been ascertained that he died in what is now York County, but in what at the time of his death was still Lancaster County. The records of the Register of Wills at Lancaster show that he died intestate and that letters of administration on



his estate were granted on May 2, 1748, to Barbara Smyser, his widow, George Smyser and Jacob Henbough; the identity of neither of whom has been established, becoming sureties on her administration bond in the sum of 270 pounds.

As against this, the land records in York County contain several deeds, which indicate that (John) George actually left a will.

One deed, dated February 19, 1763, and recorded in Record Book B, page 46, is from George Miller and Barbara, his wife, "late Barbara Smysser, widow of George Smysser, late of Newberry Township," and Mathias Smyser, the oldest son of George, to one John Myer, and conveys "A certain tract of land situate on great Conewago Creek on the West side of Susquehanna River (then) within the County of Lancaster (but now in the County of York) bounded and described as follows, . . . containing two hundred and twenty-four acres and the allowances of six per cent for roads and highways."

Another deed is from John Smyser "to all persons to whom these presents shall come." It is dated August 16, 1773, is recorded in Record Book E, page 395, and recites that John Smyser is one of the sons of George Smyser and that in consideration of 100 pounds 6 shillings and 8 pence, John Smyser quit-claims and confirms the "within described lands" to John Meyer. Evidently this is an endorsement on another deed rather than a deed independent in itself.

A later deed (see deed from Jacob Furrey and wife to David Scherrick, March 25, 1796, Record Book 2-L,

page 424) indicates that the 224 acres above mentioned were located on the Great Conewago Creek, that by deed of August 20, 1746, the lands were conveyed by Caspar Glatfelter and Henry Walsley and their wives to "George Schmeisser (by the name of George Smyser)" and recites that George made his will on February 17, 1747, giving one-third of his estate to his wife, Barbara, and two-thirds to his children, equally, and died leaving to survive him Barbara, his widow, Matthias, his eldest son, John, a second son, and Jacob, a third son, and that Jacob died under age, unmarried, and without issue before February 19, 1763, the date of the above deed to John Myer.

Just how these inconsistent declarations can be reconciled is another of the problems for future historians. For our present purpose it is only necessary to say that the branch of the family which in 1845 adjourned for one hundred years has again adjourned with the two other branches of the family for another century. This pamphlet is a record of the events which led up to that adjournment.

George Hay Kain  
Hamilton Martin Smyser  
Minnie Marie Altland  
Elizabeth Smyser Hessemer  
George Hay Kain, Jr.  
Margaret Smyser Crane

*Committee on Publication*

## *Program*

### SMYSER BICENTENNIAL

JUNE 22, 1946

★ ★ ★

BAND CONCERT, 2:30 to 3 P. M.

SINGING OF "AMERICA"

SPRING GARDEN BAND, Lester K. Loucks, *Conductor*  
*Gertrude Chalfant, Soloist*

INVOCATION . . . . . Rev. Irvin M. Lau  
*Assistant Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, York, Pa.*

ADDRESS OF WELCOME . . . . . William S. McClellan  
*President of Bicentennial Committee*

MALE QUARTET . . . . . "YORKCO FOUR"

ADDRESS . . . . . "The Smyser Family"  
*George Hay Kain, Esq., York, Pa.*

MUSIC . . . . . Glenn S. Garrett, *Soloist*

ADDRESS "YORK COUNTY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE  
AMERICAN WARS" . . . . . General Jacob Loucks Devers,  
United States Army  
*(Introduced by Samuel Smyser Lewis)*

MALE QUARTET . . . . . "Yorkco Four"

ADDRESS . . . . . "The Family in a Democracy"

*Very Reverend William Hamilton Nes, Dean*

*Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans, La.*

ANNIVERSARY POEM . . . . . William C. Busser, author

*Read by Miss Minnie Marie Altland*

SINGING . . . . . "God Be with You Till  
We Meet Again"

"STAR SPANGLED BANNER" . . . . . Played by Spring  
Garden Band

BENEDICTION . . . . . Rev. Gerald G. Neely

*(Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, York, Pa., of which members of the  
Smyser Family were among the founders)*

## MINUTES

**T**HE Bicentennial Meeting of The Smyser Family in America was held on the York Fair Grounds, at York, Pennsylvania, on Saturday afternoon, June twenty-second, Nineteen Hundred and Forty-six.

Preceding the formal opening of the meeting, from two-thirty to three o'clock, a band concert was given by the Spring Garden Band of York, under the leadership of Mr. Lester K. Loucks, with Miss Gertrude Chalfant as vocal soloist.

At three o'clock, the meeting was opened with the singing of "America," followed by an Invocation by the Reverend Irvin M. Lau, Assistant Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, York, Pennsylvania:

### INVOCATION

Almighty and most merciful God Who, by Thy Divine Providence, hast led our forefathers, whom we honor this day, to this land where they found refuge from oppression and freedom to worship Thee according to the dictates of their conscience: We pray Thee to guide us in the way of Truth, Righteousness and Peace, so that we, their descendants, may forever enjoy the blessings of Thy promises to the people whose God is the Lord.

We thank Thee, our heavenly Father, for their faith, courage, fortitude and wisdom as they braved



the storms of the ocean, the tribulations of the wilderness, and the task of founding a democracy. Help us to cherish their valor and the grand heritage they have left to us. Grant us grace to carry on the torch they have entrusted to us, so that we may keep open the way for our children's children and succeeding generations.

Help us, by our daily lives, to teach accuracy in our arithmetic, positiveness in our language, honesty in our history, world brotherhood in our geography, thoroughness in our handicraft, fair play on our playgrounds, tolerance in our social relations, reverence in our astronomy, and a Christlike spirit in all things and toward all people.

Gracious Father of us all, may we hear Thee say to us this day, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with Thee." Strengthen our faith so that we may rely on Thy guidance and trust in Thy justice. Keep us humble in spirit, honest in our motives, and pure in heart. Grant us grace to dedicate ourselves to the observance of spiritual values and the practice of true Christian service, always remembering that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord.

These favors and blessings we ask, with the forgiveness of all our sins, in the name of Jesus our blessed Master and Redeemer. *Amen.*

Mr. William S. McClellan,<sup>1</sup> President of the Bicentennial Committee, called the meeting to order and welcomed the members and guests:



*Uncles and Aunts, Cousins and Friends:*

I now call to order the Bicentennial Meeting of The Smyser Family in America. The descendants of Matthias Smyser are welcome; the descendants of John George Smyser are welcome; the descendants of Margaretta Smyser are welcome. All of you who were lucky enough to have married into the Smyser family are welcome; and all of the friends of the Smyser family are welcome. So we are all welcome today.

(At this point, there approached on the racetrack, in front of the grand-stand, a truck on which was mounted a boat depicting that from which the original four Smyser ancestors landed in America. The boat was occupied by four persons who, as they descended from the boat, were introduced by the chairman, as follows:

“Friends, our ancestors are now drifting into harbor. I am sure they spent at least six weeks sailing across the Atlantic, instead of coming across in one day. The boys are coming first: That is Matthias, aged sixteen. There comes Margaretta, aged twenty, (carrying the Family Bible); and there comes Anna Barbara, aged fifty. She was a widow who came across with her children. There comes little John George, aged nine. Will you please come up on the platform?

<sup>1</sup> William Smith McClellan, A.B., Williams College, son of William Henry McClellan, who was a son of Dr. Henry M. McClellan, a member of the 1845 Committee on Resolutions, and who was a son of Catherine Louise Smyser, a daughter of Philip A. Smyser who was a member of the same Committee and one of the Secretaries of the Centennial Celebration. Philip A. Smyser who prepared the “Historical Narrative,” read at that time by Rev. Charles A. Hay, was a son of Matthias Smyser, Jr., who was a son of Matthias, the immigrant.

Upon alighting, the four stood with heads bowed as if in a prayer of Thanksgiving for their safe arrival. They then crossed the race-track and took seats upon the speakers' platform).

In this pageant Anna Barbara Smyser, the mother, was portrayed by Mrs. Elizabeth Brunhouse Smyser; Margaretta Smyser by Mrs. Virginia Smyser Cook; and the two boys, Matthias and George, by Karl Ernst Katz and John Philip Larson, respectively.

I hold in my hand "The Minutes of the Centennial Celebration of the descendants of the Elder Matthias Smyser on May 3, 1945, on the farm of Samuel Smyser in West Manchester Township."<sup>1</sup> I think that I hear a motion to dispense with reading of these minutes at this time, and it is so ordered.

The Committee that arranged for our last meeting, one hundred and one years ago, consisted of four men: Joseph Smyser, John Emig, David Smyser, and Major George Hay. Each of them is represented by descendants here today.

The Resolution Committee consisted of my great-grandfather, Philip Smyser, my grandfather, Dr. Henry M. McClellan, and Rev. S. Oswald who is represented here today by his descendants. I would like to read one of the resolutions presented at that meeting:

"RESOLVED, to adjourn, recommending to our descendants the holding of a similar celebration on the 3rd day of May, 1945—and further, that we entertain the hope that this homestead of our ancestor will be known and held in the name of Smyser."

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, page 69, for a reprint of this pamphlet.

And so today we are holding this celebration to carry out this resolution of a hundred years ago, and in so doing honor those who have gone before us. Because of wartime conditions existing on May 3, 1945, the celebration had to be postponed until this year.

The homestead on which the celebration of a hundred years ago was held is still standing about a mile to the west of us on the East Berlin road. It remained in possession of the Smyser family until the death of Samuel Smyser, who willed it to the Children's Home of York in whose possession it now is. However, in holding today's meeting on these York Fair grounds, we are meeting on land purchased by the York County Agricultural Society from the Smyasers.

At the meeting of a hundred years ago, one hundred and thirty-three persons were present. The size of this gathering today indicates how great is the development of this one family, like many others. While the branches spread over the world, the roots are still deep in the home soil.

It is well, perhaps, for us who are prone to think that we are living in an age surrounded by many problems, to realize, while our thoughts are turned back two centuries, that our ancestors' problems were also tremendous. They had the courage, the will, and the faith to win through, and we can do no less.

As we tell our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren about the Bicentennial of the Smyser Family in 1946, my hope is that we may tell them

that we did not know we had so many relatives, that we enjoyed meeting them again, or for the first time, and, also, I hope we may tell them that everybody had a grand time.

MALE QUARTETTE . . . . . "*Yorkco Four*"

PRESIDENT McCLELLAN:

It is hardly necessary for me to introduce our first speaker.

He is a perpetual Yorker and a Smyser. .

He is equally well known to you whether he wears an academic robe, a Knights Templar uniform, or the garb of a lawyer and citizen. Today he wears the toga of the Historian. George Hay Kain, Esquire.

ADDRESS . . . . . "*The Smyser Family*"

GEORGE HAY KAIN, *Esquire*, York<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Hay Kain, B.S., M.S., Gettysburg College, LL.B. Harvard, son of William Henry Kain and Clara Maria Hay. She was a daughter of Colonel George Hay, a member of the 1845 Committee. He was a son of John Hay and his wife Susan Smyser who was a daughter of Colonel John Michael Smyser, who was a son of Matthias, the immigrant.





## SCHMEISSER-SMEISSER-SMYSER FAMILY

1653-1731-1745-1946

“Schmeisser”—*One who throws, a spear-man*

On the morning of September 21, 1731, a number of Palatines disembarked from the ship *Britannia* of London at the foot of Market Street, then High Street, in Philadelphia. The term “Palatine” was applied not only to residents of the Palatinate itself, but also to those persons who lived in the various German states, principalities, and other subdivisions adjacent to the head-waters of the Rhine and the Neckar.

For years these Palatines had been coming to Pennsylvania in increasing numbers, and from 1727 when the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania feared that the influx of foreigners would disturb the peaceful government of Pennsylvania, it had been required that each shipmaster should register the names of his passengers and that each male passenger over sixteen should take an oath of allegiance to King George II and fidelity

to the Penns. Beginning in 1729, there was added to this requirement an oath of abjuration in which the immigrants were required to renounce the temporal power of the Pope of Rome and the claims of the son of King James II, "The Pretender." So, on this September morning, Captain Michael Francklin of the *Britannia* led 104 of his 106 male passengers over the age of sixteen up High Street to the Provincial Court House between Second and Third Streets, where he made his returns and where the passengers took their oaths of allegiance, fidelity and abjuration; incidentally paying twelve pence for the oath and forty shillings for the privilege of entering Pennsylvania.

While this was the only group of passengers which the *Britannia*, or Captain Francklin, brought to America, we can picture the ship and the trip from the writings of those days. The *Britannia* was probably not over ninety feet in length. It had a few cabins, but the passengers were housed in the hold where they probably had not more than a space of two feet in width and six feet in length as their own. The ship was infested with rats and in some instances the hunger of the immigrants became so great that they were forced to feed upon their rat companions. Other vermin abounded. The water was foul. The food was scarce. In many instances the ship's officers were brutal. Sickness and death were rampant. On one voyage it is recorded that thirty-two children died and were thrown into the sea. At another time a woman in child birth was pushed overboard because that was the easiest method of taking care of her.



When the passengers reached Philadelphia, they were compelled to be registered and to take the necessary oaths within forty-eight hours. Having taken the oath, they were taken back to their ship and then those of them who had not been able to pay for their passage were exposed to sale and actually sold for terms of service extending for periods of three to seven years. Such persons were called "Redemptioners." In the process, families were separated; in many instances never to meet again. In other instances the Redemptioners served their time and became reputable and useful citizens. Indeed, there is a record that in 1765 the Lutheran Congregation at York actually bought a Redemptioner—George Schwerdtfager—as pastor.

The hardships of the voyage were made greater by the length of the voyage. Most of the Palatines boarded ship at Heilbronn on the headwaters of the Neckar and sailed down the Neckar to the Rhine and thence down the Rhine to Holland. In this passage they were obliged to report and pay tolls at no less than thirty-six custom houses, and the passage to Holland took from four to six weeks. In Holland there was a delay in many cases of five to six weeks, while the ships were loaded for the ocean voyage. Then there was a trip of two to four weeks to an English port, where there was a further delay of one to two weeks while the necessary clearance papers were made out; and then the ocean voyage began, requiring anywhere from eight to twelve weeks before the ship reached Philadelphia.

We have no means of knowing how long it took the *Britannia* to come to America. We know only that it

sailed from Rotterdam, cleared at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, and that it was under the command of Captain Francklin and carried two hundred sixty-nine passengers.

The ship's list is headed by John Bartholomew Rieger, who describes himself as a "High German Preacher." He became prominent in the activities of the Reformed Church, near Philadelphia, and later in Lancaster County. Among the passengers were four, whose coming to America we celebrate today. They were described on the ship's list as Barbara Smeisser, aged fifty, Margareta Smeisser, aged twenty, Matthias Smeisser, aged nineteen, and George Smeisser, aged nine.

Barbara was a widow. Her husband, Martin Smeisser, had been killed in one of the German wars. He was born October 14, 1680, one of the eight children of Andreas Schmeisser, a farmer and captain who was born in 1653, died in February 1719, and, according to the Parish Records, was buried February 27, 1719, in Trieber, Germany. Martin's mother was named Anna Maria, but we have no record of her except that she was born in 1664 and died in March, 1729, being buried on March 13 of that year.

On May 6, 1710, Martin, described as a farmer at Rügelsbach, was married to the daughter of Master Johann Georg Kucher, the miller at the Red Mill. Our earlier records attributed to her the name of Anna Barbara, but later searches of the Parish Records in Germany seem to indicate that her name was Maria Barbara, although in one instance she is mentioned as

Anna Barbara, and it is possible that her full name was Anna Maria Barbara Kucher. Her father had been born December 29, 1653. He died December 12, 1706, and his son, George, succeeded his father at the Red Mill.

Tradition has it that Martin died in a battle, which, if we can trace the battle aright, took place something like one hundred years before he was born; so that we have no actual record of his death. Of his children, Anna Margaretha was born March 22, 1711, Matthias, February 17, 1715, and George, June 15, 1721. There were at least three other children, an Andreas, born in 1714, an earlier George, born in 1717, and a second Andreas born in 1719, the latter dying September 22, 1721. It is clear from this duplication of names, a practice by no means uncommon in early days, that all of Barbara's children, except the three she brought with her, had died in Rügelsbach where all of the children were born.

Rügelsbach was and is a small farming village six miles to the west of Dinkelsbühl.<sup>1</sup> The Parish records of these early Smyders indicate some connection between Dinkelsbühl and Rügelsbach, although in later years, at least, Dinkelsbühl was in the Duchy of Bavaria and Rügelsbach in the Duchy of Wurtemberg. The Red Mill was on the road from Dinkelsbühl to Rügelsbach, and according to the German tradition the Mill of Dinkelsbühl, which may well have been

<sup>1</sup> See "*Dinkelsbühl, Romantic Vision from the Past*," Hans Hildebrand, *National Geographic Magazine*, December 1931, pp. 688-702, with 12 natural color photographs and four half-tones.



the Red Mill, had been in existence for centuries before the Kuchers became millers there. Dinkelsbühl itself existed long before William the Conqueror invaded England. In the year 928 it was made a walled city. In 1351, the Emperor Karl IV, granted it as a hereditary feudal tenure to the Prince of Oettingen. In the same year the citizens purchased it from the Prince and thereafter it existed as a "Free City."

Why did this widow with her three children leave her homeland and endure the hardships of the ocean voyage to an unknown country?

To find an answer to that question we must go back another one hundred years. In 1618 the Elector Frederick V, claimed the throne of Bohemia. This claim, apparently made without any right whatever, precipitated what to that time was the most terrible war in history. It was known as the Thirty Years War and during that war the Palatinate was devastated. Contending armies fought back and forth over the territory and laid it waste. When the war terminated in 1648, it is reported that seventy-five per cent. of the inhabitants had been killed and that two-thirds of the people of Dinkelsbühl were no more. However, the inhabitants set about to restore their land, but just as they had brought it again to a place of peace and plenty, Louis XIV of France declared war on Holland and directed that the Palatinate be laid waste, so that it would afford no succor to his enemies. Again and again, the French and Dutch armies roamed over the Palatinate and life was again cheap and life was again hard. Other wars followed and the Palatinate seems

to have been a battle ground for all of the successive wars of the time. Political and religious persecution ensued with each change of ruler, and many of the rulers were harsh and tyrannical toward their subjects who stood in hardly better light than so many cattle.

Meanwhile, William Penn had acquired Pennsylvania and set about to people his Province. He had been in Germany and was familiar with the Germans of the Palatinate. His agents spread what would now be called propaganda throughout the territory. Pennsylvania was lauded to the skies. One writer characterizes the promises as leading the Germans to believe that Providence would put roasted pigeons into their mouths. In 1683 the first considerable emigration from Germany was led by Francis Daniel Pastorius and Germantown was founded.

In 1694 Kelpius and his group of mystics came and settled along the Wissahickon. Then there was little further emigration until 1709 when the German migration to what became Newburgh on the Hudson took place. Queen Anne out of pity for these suffering Germans made advances to them, as a result of which there was a virtual invasion of England by poor and starving Germans. To get rid of the burden, many of them were sent to America with the idea that they would manufacture naval stores for England.

There was dissatisfaction at Newburgh and a large part of the colony moved to the Schoharie region where they again met hardship and disaster, so that in 1723 and in 1728 large numbers of these Germans sailed down the Susquehanna to the Swatara, and up



the Swatara to the Tulpehocken region. The second of these groups was led by the well known Conrad Weiser.

Meantime, in 1710 there had been another large emigration of Swiss Mennonites to what is now Lancaster County. Just before 1717 there was another influx of Germans from the Fatherland and the provincial authorities of Pennsylvania became disturbed at the increase of their foreign population, so that in 1727 the regulations for registration and allegiance were put into effect.

There are two other causes which led to this German emigration. One was the glowing reports which the new citizens of Pennsylvania sent back to Germany. The other was the activity of the various shipping companies which saw profit in the transportation of human freight. They employed agents who were called "Newlanders," or sometimes "soul-sellers," who received so much per head for the emigrants whom they were able to deliver in Holland. The representations of these Newlanders must have been even greater than those of the agents through whom Penn sought to advertise his Province. Between the Newlanders on the one hand and the shipping companies and the captains on the other, the voyagers were robbed, ill-treated, and in many instances sold into virtual slavery. Sea chests were stolen or left behind. Ships were intentionally sailed out of their course, so that the captain might demand additional monies for the food necessary to a longer voyage, and the longer voyage and the scarcity of food often created starvation and even death.

There is no record that Barbara and her children became indentured servants, although we are in ignorance as to their early actions in Pennsylvania.

The minutes of the Smyser celebration of 1845 recited the tradition that Matthias settled in the Kreutz Creek Valley as a weaver; that he and his brother, George, then took up lands in the neighborhood of what is now Spring Grove; that in order to secure neighbors they gave away portions of their land and finally so impoverished themselves that they moved away, Matthias to a farm which he bought May 3, 1745, along the Monocacy Road west of York, and George to a farm near York Haven, from whence it was stated that he moved West.

To some extent at least these traditions are inaccurate. There is evidence that by March 1, 1737, Matthias and George began to improve lands near Spring Grove. George took up land near what is now the Borough of Manchester and died in 1747, letters of administration on his estate being granted in Lancaster County, of which York County then formed a part.

On the other hand, it may be that Matthias at least settled in the first instance near Lebanon. At any rate, he was married there by the Reverend John Casper Stoever on August 2, 1738, to Anna Catharine Koppenhoefer. On May 22, 1740, Mr. Stoever, at Codorus, married George to Barbara Stambach, and shortly thereafter, on November 25, 1740, the bride and groom acted as sponsors at the baptism of the second son of Matthias, John Michael, who was born November 21, 1740.

Matthias and George were among those who signed the "Church Book" of Mr. Stoevers Lutheran Congregation at York which was founded in 1733, but we have no evidence that the actual signatures were appended in that year. However, the indications are that Matthias was in York County not later than 1740, and on May 3, 1745, he bought the farm which remained in the Smyser family until the death of Samuel Smyser, who bequeathed it to the Children's Home with the right in the descendants of Matthias to congregate there for family reunions from time to time. The farm or so much as remains of the original farm now lies between the Lincoln Highway and the Berlin Road to the west of the Western Maryland Railway.

Of the three children, Margarita married Christian Oyster, now Eyster, and had six children. Matthias had eleven children, of whom ten survived, while George had three, possibly four, children, of whom one died before he attained the age of twenty-one years.

It was only the descendants of Matthias who met in 1845 and adjourned for one hundred years. At that time, it was estimated that there were 1162 descendants of Matthias alone. Then the Smyser descendants celebrated alone his settlement in York County rather than his emigration from Germany. Today we are celebrating not only that, but also the coming to America of the widow, Barbara, with her three children.

Dinkelsbühl was captured and recaptured several times during the Thirty Years War. In 1632 the City



was besieged by a large contingent of Swedish troops led by an aggressive colonel. Food was scarce. Defenses were few. The Council of the City had received two messages, one from the Swedes, a blunt demand for unconditional surrender, the other a secret message that the Imperial Government could not furnish aid to the City. The Council was undecided as to its course of action. It had refused peace overtures time and time again. It could expect no mercy from the Swedish colonel. Far into the night the Council sat. Finally, there was a faint tap at the door and a maiden entered and made a suggestion to the assembly. In some way she had learned that the Swedish colonel had recently lost by death his five year old son. She suggested that the next morning she with a contingent of the children of Dinkelsbühl should wait upon the colonel and ask for mercy. The Council did not look with favor upon the suggestion, but no one had a better suggestion to offer and it was decided that no harm could come from the suggestion.

The next morning, when the colonel rode up to the gates with his demand for surrender, he was met not by an army of soldiers, but by a host of children led by the maiden who had made the suggestion. He was angry, frowned his displeasure, and was about to ride down the children when suddenly he spied a blue-eyed sandy-haired boy who was just the age of the son whom he had left in Sweden and whom he would never see again. He leaned down from the saddle, picked up the child, and the victory was that of Dinkelsbühl. Ever since, the City has celebrated the

victory of these children over the Swedes. Tradition, however, has it that the colonel turned to the Council and said:

“Just for these little angels’ sake  
 Shall I now spare the town;  
 Your life be yours, remember,  
 But theirs be the deed’s renown.”

So let us today celebrate not the settling of Mathias on his farm, but the coming to America of the courageous Barbara with her young children. Let this celebration be her “deed’s renown.”

★ ★ ★

MUSIC . . . . . : *Glenn S. Garrett, Soloist*

PRESIDENT McCLELLAN:

The President of the York Fair, Mr. Samuel Smyser Lewis, will introduce our next speaker.

MR. SAMUEL SMYSER LEWIS:

Mr. Chairman, and friends of the Smyser Clan: The Board of Managers of the York County Agricultural Society, of which I have the honor of being the president, are delighted that you are using its plant for holding the Bicentennial Reunion of the Smyser Family.

The York Fair grounds were purchased from Samuel Smyser, and is a part of the original Matthias Smyser farm on which the Centennial Meeting of the Smyser Family was held May 3, 1845.



Tangible evidence of the Society's interest in perpetuating the memory and valor of the York Countians who participated in the American Wars are the memorial gates at the several entrances to these grounds. They were erected by the Society in honor of the York Countians who participated in the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the War between the States, better known as the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I.

Now, as after World War I, there is much talk but no action in the matter of honoring the twenty thousand boys and girls, men and women, from York County who were in the naval and military service during World War II. I know no more appropriate time than now, immediately preceding an address, "York County's Participation in the American Wars," to state publicly what I have had in mind for quite some time; that is, I purpose to suggest, in fact recommend, to the Board of Managers of the York County Agricultural Society that they also erect a suitable memorial to those twenty thousand York Countians who participated in World War II. It is my thought that this memorial should be in the shape of an Auditorium Building which, during the Fair, could be used for exhibition purposes, and at other times throughout the year for events similar to the one being held today.

Of all those from York County who participated in all the American Wars, none attained higher military rank than did our own "Jake" Devers. General Jacob L. Devers, who is now one of the highest ranking officers of the United States Army, during World

War II was also one of the outstanding, highest ranking, combatant officers. He is an international, worldwide, military figure, and an exception to the old saying, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." "Jake" is respected, honored and loved by all of his native county.

It is with pleasure that I present General Devers.

ADDRESS . . . . . "*York County's Participation  
in the American Wars*"

*General* JACOB LOUCKS DEVERS, United States Army<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jacob Loucks Devers, B.S., United States Military Academy, LL.D., Williams College, born in York. General, United States Army, Commanding General, Army Ground Forces.

This address was read into the *Congressional Record* of June 24, 1946, by Congressman Chester H. Gross, appearing at page A 3885.



## YORK COUNTY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE AMERICAN WARS

To be asked to speak at this reunion of the Smyders is an honor which is gratifying, indeed. But because York is my home town, and I know so many of you here so well, it is even more of a compliment, and I assure you that I appreciate it deeply.

With you, I regret the fact that this Smyser Day could not be celebrated a year ago, on the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Smyser family in York County. But we still had a job to finish a year ago. We had just won a bitter war on one front, and final victory on another front was still just beyond our grasp. Today we can more fittingly celebrate Smyser Day, for we have emerged wholly victorious in war. Now we have only to win the victory of final, lasting peace.

Two hundred and one years ago, Anna Barbara Smyser and her family came to Pennsylvania and settled in what is now York County. Widowed by war in her native Germany, she brought her children to America to make a new life in the New World, and escape the troubled times of the Old World.

But then, as now, it was One World, and the times were troubled in America, too. Even then, the ocean was not wide enough to isolate us. In Europe, they called it the Seven Years War. Here, we called it the French and Indian War. But by any name it was the same war, and York County was threatened. The men of York responded as they have responded to every threat in their homes and country since that day—they mobilized for war.

The British sent General Braddock and his red-coats to the American colonies to meet the French and Indian threat. In 1755 he marched across Pennsylvania to meet utter defeat near the French stronghold of Fort Duquesne. General Braddock himself was killed. Had it not been for some two thousand provincial troops under a Colonel George Washington, many of them from York County, that defeat might have had even more disastrous consequences.

But those American woodsmen under Washington knew how to fight Indians, and how to fight *like* Indians. They held their own, and covered the retreat of Braddock's battered red-coats.

Made bold by their defeat of Braddock, the Indians pressed more and more closely on York County, raiding and burning frontier farms. In 1756, one thousand York County men—eight companies of militia—were under arms. When the Delaware Indians concentrated ominously at nearby Fort Kittanning, the first sheriff of York County, Captain Hance Hamilton, led a successful expedition against them. And two years later—when Fort Duquesne was finally taken—the men of York were there.



The men of York were there when the Revolution started, too. I quote from Carter and Glossbrenner's history of the first hundred years of York County:

"There is not a part of Pennsylvania wherein the love of liberty displayed itself earlier or more strongly than in the county of York. Military companies with a view to the resisting of Great Britain were formed in York while the people of the neighboring counties slept. In those days there were men here of broad breast and firm step, who feared no power and bowed to no dominion!"

The first company in the Revolution from the entire state of Pennsylvania was the York Rifles—a proud organization whose military history antedates that of the United States, and will unquestionably endure as long as the United States. Let us hope *that* will be *forever*.

Under Captain Michael Doudel, the Rifles left York on the first of July, 1775, and marched five hundred miles to Cambridge, Massachusetts. They were the first company to arrive there from west of the Hudson River and south of Long Island.

In a skirmish with British regulars a few days after their arrival, they captured two red-coats and killed five, losing but one of their own men. But the man they lost went on to make a notable contribution to the winning of the war.

His name was Corporal Walter Cruise. Captured by the British, he was sent to England and confined for several months in the Tower of London. There, his leather hunting shirt and his long rifle made him



an object of much interest and curiosity. I might add that Walter Cruise, like all members of the York Rifles in virtually all of our wars, was a notable rifle marksman. His own weapon—the long rifle—although sometimes known as the Kentucky rifle because of its popularity in that state, was actually a Pennsylvania rifle, developed in York and Lancaster counties.

When the York Rifles were organized, the first lieutenant of the company, Henry Miller, drew the figure of a British soldier on a barn door. He allowed no man to join the company who could not hit the nose of the red-coat on the barn door from a distance of one hundred and fifty feet.

There were groups in London much in sympathy with the American revolutionists, and it wasn't long before Corporal Cruise, a personable lad, was released from the Tower. Thereafter, he gave exhibitions of his marksmanship with the long rifle, in and around London.

British troops, in those days, were armed with muskets, and couldn't hit the broad side of a barn at fifty paces, much less shoot off a man's nose. When word got around about the sharpshooter from Pennsylvania, who swore that every man in his company, and every man in York County, could shoot as straight, recruiting for the British Army fell way off. In fact, it fell off so far that George the Third was forced to hire 53,000 more Hessians, to fight for him in the colonies!

At the time of the Revolution, the population of York County was less than 25,000. But in April, 1778, York County had 4,621 militiamen—almost one-fifth

of her population! Hardly a man under fifty was to be seen on the streets of York.

York County produced more than her share of famous military figures in the Revolution. Henry Miller, lieutenant of the York Rifles, won the complete confidence of General Washington, became a colonel in the Revolution, and a brigadier general in the War of 1812. John Clark, also a lieutenant under Braddock, became a brigadier in the Revolution. The captain of the first military company organized in York, in December, 1774, was James Smith, whom you all know as a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and who was promoted to the rank of colonel. The first lieutenant of that company was Thomas Hartley, who also became a colonel, a member of Congress for eleven years after the war, and eventually a major general in the militia.

But York also saw other famous political and military figures of the Revolution. In the dark winter of 1777-1778, when General Howe held Philadelphia, and General Washington was encamped at Valley Forge, York was the seat of government for the colonies, and host to the Continental Congress. General Gates reported to the Congress in York after defeating Burgoyne at Saratoga. It was here that Lafayette and von Steuben were given their commands, and Count Pulaski was authorized to form his corps of volunteers. Many of Pulaski's men were recruited in York.

With the end of the Revolution, the people of York County were again free to enjoy the pursuits of peace. But not for long. Another world war gripped the

globe—a whole series of wars. They were known in Europe as the Napoleonic Wars. When we were finally involved, we called it the War of 1812. But we were an active ally of Napoleon, just the same.

Because England was so heavily engaged with Napoleon in Europe, she had comparatively few troops to spare for the prosecution of her side issue with us. Our Regular Army, Navy and Militia, small as they were, sufficed us for about two years.

But when the enemy took Washington, and the night sky in York was lighted by the flames of our burning Capitol, six companies of volunteers were hastily organized. A company from York and a company from Hanover marched to help in the successful defense of Baltimore. Their contribution to the defense of our country must have been a thrilling experience. "By the dawn's early light" they could see with their eyes that "our flag was still there"—that the star-spangled banner still flew over Fort McHenry.

Another generation of peace, and we were at war with Mexico. This was not a world war, but the world was at war, nevertheless. England and France were battling Russia in the Crimea.

But terrible as is a world at war, there is nothing more terrible than a civil war. Our War Between the States very nearly became a world war, as you know, for Great Britain was on the verge of entering it on the side of the Confederacy.

President Lincoln issued his first call for troops, to defend the Union, on April 15, 1861. On April 20, two companies from York, the Worth Infantry under





*William Smith McClellan, President*



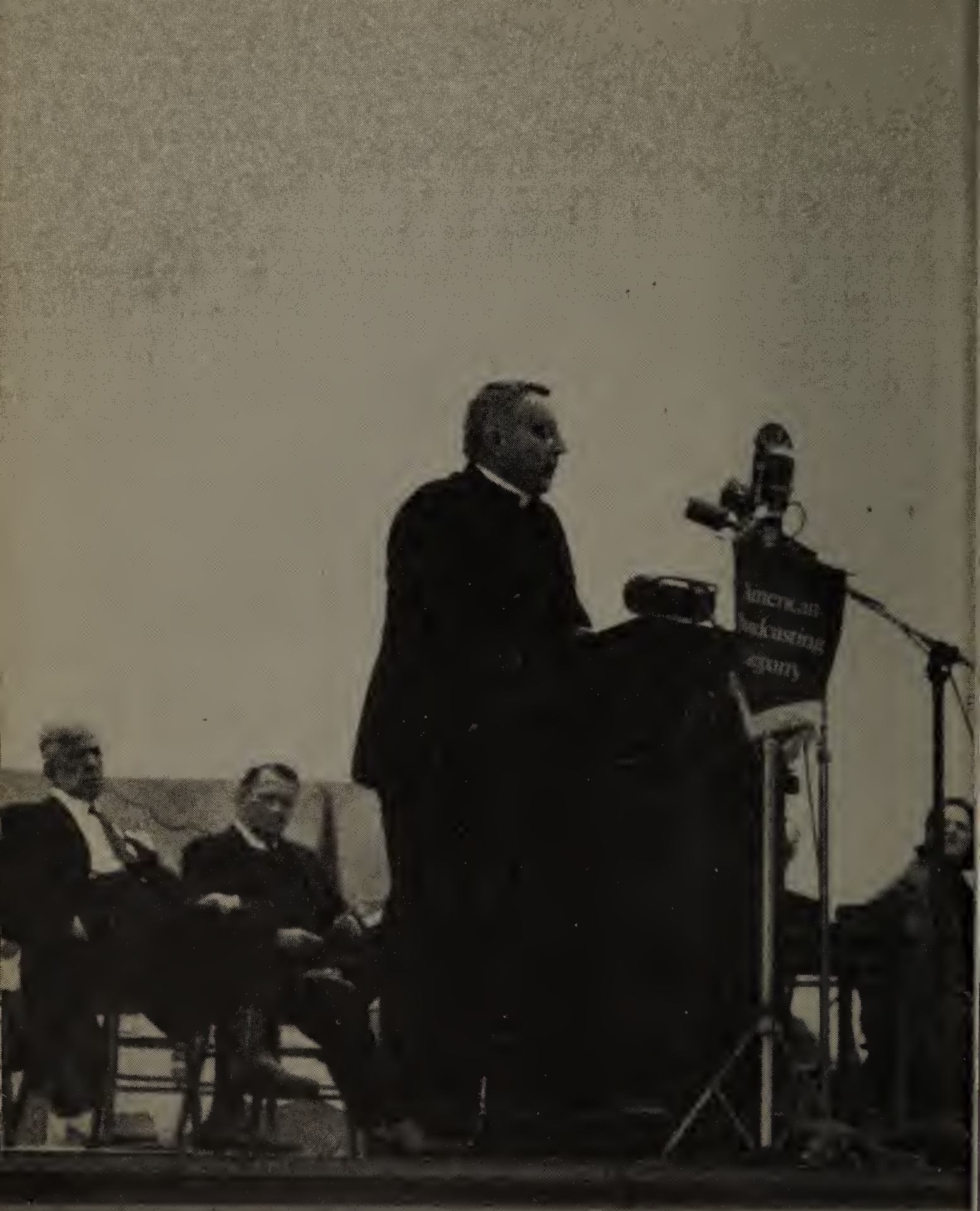
*George Hay Kain, Esquire*





*General Jacob Loucks Devers*





*Very Reverend William Hamilton Nes*

Captain Thomas A. Zeigle, and the York Rifles under Captain George Hay, marched to war. They were the first Pennsylvania volunteers to enter the service fully armed, fully equipped and fully uniformed.

Captain Zeigle, who had been a sergeant in the Mexican War, became a colonel in the Civil War; Captain Hay, a brigadier general.

Forty companies from York, in all, fought in the War Between the States, in addition to innumerable individual soldiers. General William B. Franklin, of York, commanded two divisions of the Army of the Potomac; his brother, Samuel R. Franklin, was a rear admiral. Horatio Gates Gibson, of York, a second lieutenant with Scott in Mexico, became a brigadier. The 87th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, nine-tenths of its men from York, participated in thirty-eight battles and skirmishes.

The greatest battlefield of that war lies not far from where we are gathered today. It is reliably reported that the first shot in the Battle of Gettysburg was fired by a York man. We do not know his name, but we do know that he was from York County, and we can honor his deed.

Just as the men of York rallied when Baltimore was threatened by an invader fifty years before, they rallied when Pennsylvania herself was threatened. As the rising tide of the Confederacy approached, prominent citizens all over the state, men who for reasons of age or physical disability had not been called up for military service, organized themselves into militia units and took up arms in defense of their homes. Company F



of the 26th Emergency Regiment was recruited in York by the Reverend Frederick Klinefelter of York College. It was this company which offered the first opposition to the Confederate Armies in Pennsylvania. They faced the entire Confederate corps commanded by General Jubal Early, however, and were forced to retreat.

Following the War Between the States, we enjoyed the longest period of peace in our history, until the Spanish-American War. Again, a world war was narrowly averted. There were two other fleets at Manila the day Admiral Dewey faced the Spanish Armada. One was German, one British. The Kaiser's warships, without explanation, suspiciously maneuvered themselves alongside the Spanish ships. Tension was high, for the Spanish and German strength, combined, greatly exceeded our own. Then the British flotilla, with a band playing on the deck of each battleship, ranged itself alongside the American fleet, and the Germans sailed away. The tune those British bands were playing was the Star-Spangled Banner!

A generation later, the Kaiser was ready—and we were not. Another generation, and Hitler was ready—and we were not.

I am not going to attempt to recite to you the contributions of York and York County to World Wars I and II. They were as notable as they were in all of the wars into which the United States of America has been plunged, and they are well known to all of us.

Equal to the contribution of York County in men-at-arms in World War II were the services of her busy industries, and of the thousands of men and women



who devotedly stayed at their jobs in her shops and factories. Important, too, was the produce of York County's rich farms, which helped out of all proportion in feeding our armies and those of our allies, and which, right now, are playing so magnificent a role in feeding a hungry world.

That world today stands at a crossroads. The name given the forthcoming atomic bomb test at Bikini—Operations Crossroads—is most appropriate. Our world, one world, has its choice right now of two avenues. One is broad and straight and smooth, and leads to Peace. The other is narrow and winding and devious, and leads to War. Which will we choose?

The choice of the United States, this time, is doubly important, because we have emerged from the war the most powerful, the most influential nation in the world. Our choice will have immeasurable effect on the choice of other nations. I have mentioned the fact that, although all wars are tragic, the most tragic war is a civil war. Any future war, in this One World of ours, would be a *fratricidal* civil war. This nation, and all nations, **MUST** choose peace.

But after each of our wars, we have chosen what we thought was the road to a lasting peace. And in a generation, more or less, we have found ourselves on a detour. That detour has invariably led us on the road to War.

How can we avoid that detour this time? Let us examine the steps which took us there the last time.

With our victory in World War I, we retired behind our oceans and, by our withdrawal, scuttled the

League of Nations. But those oceans have never protected us from world wars, not for two hundred years. We have fought in five world wars. Only our great good fortune kept it from being seven world wars.

Today those oceans protect us less then ever. Let us, therefore, with our victory in World War II, honestly acknowledge our responsibilities to the world as a whole. Let us continue our leading part in the United Nations, and implement its great potential strength for peace with our determination to preserve that peace.

What else did we do, or not do, after World War I, which led us into World War II?

With the best intentions in the world, we disarmed. We reduced our Army and our Navy to a pitiful size. But the rest of the world was not all of good intentions as we were. Our very disarmament encouraged the dictators, of Japan, and Italy, and Germany, to arm. And not only to arm, but to wage war.

Fortunately for us, our allies, in some instances, were able to withstand their assaults for the more than two years it took us before we were ready to strike back. In any future war, we will not have that protection. The enemy will strike suddenly, and he will strike at the United States first, because he cannot win any future war until the United States of America, the most powerful nation in the world, is beaten.

I quoted to you an historian of York County, who, writing of York County in the American Revolution, said: "There were men here of broad breast and firm step, who feared no power and bowed to no dominion."

I believe the people of York County, and of Pennsylvania, and of all the United States, are still so minded. To none of us is the prospect of an America on her knees pleasing.

Then how may we discourage such an attack? We can discourage such an attack—I will go further and say that we can almost definitely prevent it—by never abandoning an adequate National Security program.

George Fielding Eliot, the military commentator, affords us a striking illustration of the sort of military security we must have. We can no longer think in terms of defense, he says, because there is, as yet, no defense against an attack by rockets, for instance. Our only eventual salvation lies in potential offensive strength—immediately available effective strength, if it is proven necessary.

You are walking down the street, Mr. Eliot suggests, and you see ex-Sergeant Joe Louis standing on the corner with his hands in his pockets. Mr. Eliot and myself like Joe Louis, but, just for the sake of the argument, you don't like him. Do you walk up and hit him?

No, you don't. You don't hit him because you **KNOW** your first punch won't knock him out. And you know equally well that **HIS** first punch will do just that to you.

In World War II, V-2 rocket attacks upon our troops and the civilian population of Europe did not stop until our Army Ground Forces—infantry, armored, cavalry and artillery—had penetrated to



the heart of Germany, destroyed the Nazi armies, and captured the rocket launching sites. Similarly, in any future wars, rocket attacks or worse on the cities, industries and people of the United States itself would not be stopped until our Army Ground Forces could penetrate to the heart of the enemy homeland, destroy his armies, and capture his launching sites.

Therefore, we must be strong enough, at all times, to do just that. President Truman has proposed to Congress a comparatively small Regular Army, Air Force and Navy; a greatly strengthened National Guard and Organized Reserve Corps, and a General Reserve composed of male citizens who have received universal military training.

Such a program will do more than shield us from attack. It will make the voice of the United States heard with respect, when it is lifted in the councils of the peace, just as it was heard with respect when it was lifted in the councils of the war.

Such a program, some say, is not in keeping with American tradition. It is conscription. But neither is *war* in keeping with American tradition.

We are a peaceful nation. Yet we fought one war with a foreign power even before we were a nation—one to become a nation—and five since we became a nation.

Let us, therefore, mobilize for peace, and win the peace. Surely, if we can win seven wars, we can win one peace!

★   ★   ★

MALE QUARTETTE . . . . . "*Yorkco Four*"



PRESIDENT McCLELLAN:

A former Yorker and a Smyser descendant is back with us today. He attended the York Public Schools and the York County Academy, and after further schooling in Washington, D.C., attended Harvard and then Oxford in England, where he received a "Diploma in Theology with Distinction." Since 1927 he has lived in New Orleans where he is now Dean of Christ Church Cathedral.

We appreciate his interest in this occasion and it is with great pleasure that we welcome The Very Reverend William Hamilton Nes.

ADDRESS . . . . . "*The Family in a Democracy*"

*Very Reverend* WILLIAM HAMILTON NES, *Dean*  
Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Very Reverend William Hamilton Nes, B.A., Harvard, B.D., D.D., Virginia Theological Seminary, D.C.L., Nashotah House (Wisconsin), Diploma in Theology with Distinction, Oxford University, England, born in York, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans, Louisiana, son of William Jefferson Nes, Esquire, who was the son of Alexander Hamilton Nes, and his wife Eliza Brillinger. She was the daughter of John Brillinger and his wife, Leah Smyser, daughter of Peter Smyser, who was a son of Colonel John Michael Smyser, who was a son of Matthias, the immigrant.



## THE FAMILY IN A DEMOCRACY

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, and my Kinsmen and Fellow-Townsmen:

I need hardly say to you that I am sensible of the honor your committee has done me by inviting me to address you on this happy occasion—an occasion not only happy for us who are the descendants of Matthias Smyser, but in its own way and in its similarity to many other family reunions, important to the country as a whole.

That it is a happy occasion is evident by this great concourse of people, by the cordial friendliness and cheerful enjoyment to be seen on every hand. It is important to others besides ourselves because the preservation of the family is necessary for the preservation of a free and humane society. I wish to say more of this later, but let it suffice now to point out that, for the best interests of man, the family must be more than a domestic group limited to a single generation. It involves kin and place and the continuity of local tradition. It bridges the years, even the centuries, with a certain elusive yet persistent pattern of affinity.

Yet, at the same time, it is an intertwining of many families, many types, many heredities. Like a bed of interlacing roots, lying between the earth and all the individual blades of grass, families and their intertwining ramifications make the living past out of which each human being arises, and from which each derives his special characteristics. We are the descendants not only of Matthias Smyser, but of countless others whose names and deeds have flowed together to make this county, this state, and this nation. Our reunion is important, therefore, because it expresses a filial reverence for a past that is neither dead nor forgotten, and because it is a testimony to the truth that a people, in its history and in its future, is not made up of uncounted anonymous individuals scattered separately like grains of sand upon the shore, but rather is made up of interpenetrating family groups with particular traditions and loyalties, like a garden whose rich variety of bloom and fragrance springs from many species of plant and bush growing through the years upon an ancient soil.

The time is not long past when self-expression was the great word. Freedom meant the right to develop one's own individuality, to carve one's own destiny, to assert one's own personality. This is undoubtedly one side of the truth. Democracy is a protest against the artificial restraints of a rigid class-structure. It has an instinctive hostility to social stratification and the dead hand of the past. It is therefore contemptuous of the Social Register and of any family pretensions by which a man seeks to compensate his own fatuous-



ness and non-productiveness by living on the money and the achievements of his ancestors. No man is a Christian, he is not even moral, if he does not despise snobbishness and exclusiveness and repudiate it in his own attitudes and conduct. American democracy is at least Christian in this, that it proposes to judge a man by his own character and to give him the chance to make the most of himself no matter what his background may be.

But there is another side of the truth, and whether we are fully conscious of it or not, we are bearing witness to it by being here. A man cannot endure the isolation of mere individualism. He needs to feel a significance beyond his own pursuits, beyond his own achievements, yes, even beyond his own self. For, after all, what is a self, what is a person? A grain of sand can be what it is all by itself. But a man cannot. Within him are the places he has seen, the people he has known, the past he has come from. Individuality is a lonely thing. A man finds himself by belonging to other people; he cannot be himself by himself. He needs a cause to serve, a work to do, and above all he needs place and family. He needs it not only in the present, for, as a man cut off from other men is marooned on a desert island, so a generation cut off from other generations becomes a little island in a vast lonely sea of time.

Many of you have come, as I have, from great distances—distances which on other continents would traverse many national boundaries, but which here serve only to bring home to us the unity and expanse



of our country. Many of you have come, as I have, after years spent in far places, in cities nurtured by cultures different from that of Pennsylvania. Such diverse origins, in other parts of the world, have kept and still keep men and families separate from each other, while here they have, not without conflict, nevertheless been wonderfully and beneficently resolved in the moulding of one people with common characteristics that denote an American anywhere in the world. When I tell you that Memorial Day is now observed in New Orleans, and that the United Daughters of the Confederacy have discovered that they invented it, you will, I am sure, be encouraged in your hopes for the settlement of present controversies.

But precisely because of this vast continental unity, and because of the increasing mobility of our population, which, like a great wind, catches us up and scatters us over the length and breadth of the land, it is a happy thing for us to stand once more amongst our own folk, and on our own ancestral soil. The political and ethnic unity of the nation is too big to shelter a man from the solitude of his own individuality. It is too big to offer him the assurance of stability and continuity amidst all of the changefulness and discontinuity of his own life. Indeed, it cannot be permitted to do so. The menace of Statism is one of the most sinister developments of our age. Sometimes it is called totalitarianism, but that is only a particular aspect of it. Whatever you call it, it has certain recognizable characteristics. It is opposed to the family and the Church, because they represent rival

loyalties. It thrives upon the decadence and disintegration of these institutions, even if it does not seek directly to bring about their ruin. In a word, it thrives on the isolation of the individual, and sets up as the only loyalty, the only rallying point, the political unity of a nation, or the economic interests of a class. It is mechanistic and subhuman; it is promoted by an education which depreciates the humanities and is concerned only with crafts and skills; it is the apotheosis of the so-called "scientific" society. This radical perversion, from which emerge the twin monsters of the political man and the economic man, can be prevented only if we recover beliefs and attitudes which are now in doubt, or even openly discarded by many of us. This is not a proper occasion to discuss this matter further. But I think all of us feel the danger, and all of us feel that we must not delay to find some antidote to the dehumanization that in so many ways is threatening us. And I am sure that all of us know instinctively that whatever else the antidote may consist of, it involves a genuine recovery of religion and a strengthening of the ties of family.

And so I say again, it is a happy thing, a comforting thing, for a man to stand among his own kin and on his own ancestral soil. Those of us who come out of the further distances and out of the further years will perhaps feel this with a special poignancy. We look for old landmarks, for a certain gabled roof, a long-remembered facade of houses on a street, a certain bit of skyline; we look perhaps for faces and presences as

they were long ago. How beautiful and pathetic is this search for within it, and as a part of it at least, is the search for our lost selves, for the long ago that is still alive in our own souls. What we are looking for, my friends, is something very mysterious, something very divine. It is nothing less than the transmutation of the past, the transfiguration of memory. But yes, we say, I should have known they would be gone. Nothing is as it used to be. Everything changes, even I myself. Yet, while we gaze at the altered scene, as it were by some miracle of stage-craft, the new and unfamiliar dissolves, and the well-remembered stands there just as it used to be. This can only happen in the place itself. We must come back and stand there, just there, to see it happen. It is not only in the mind. The magic is in the place and in the returning. One must come back. One is drawn back to one's own past, to one's own kin, to one's own soil.

This is what is called nostalgia. Is it weak, foolish, debilitating? No. It is a medicine of the soul, immensely refreshing and strengthening. It is not only for the sake of memory and revery. To stand again amongst one's folks, where one was born, is to feel the roots, deep in the past and in the land, to be ennobled by what one belongs to and has come from, to feel the great release from this too-isolating individuality. What is the past? It is the living root. It is not dead, because it still moulds us. It tells us what we are because it tells us what we were. If the past were purely and only the past, if it were really, wholly, irrevocably gone, we should not even know about it,



that it had been. A great Russian theologian has reminded us of this. The past, he says, as purely the past, is unknowable. We know the past because in some way it lives in the present. It is present, or potentially present, in all we are and do. To be sure, we are making history, for action has consequences, and pray God we may so act in our own day that its consequences may be good and strong. But, more subtly and deeply, we transmit history. We carry yesterday into tomorrow. Whether we can express it or not, being here we all feel that history, tradition, the profoundly-moulding past, is in ourselves. We are no longer outside and alone. Something that we belong to has enfolded us again to itself, and it gives us joy and comfort. We feel now how true it is that a man is too small to contain himself, and that the mass of mankind is too big to give him the immediate sense of belonging and significance. We need significance beyond ourselves. We need it as well beyond our own time. We need to feel the bridging of time, the solidarity of the generations. When you say this, or if you write it down so, it seems over-philosophic, perhaps, or too abstract, but we feel it concretely, each in his own way; and it makes our blood quicken and brightens the eyes of us all.

I have already suggested that our need of this arises rather particularly from the great mobility of the American population. I was for some years intimately occupied with the problems of migratory labor, and I learned that migration, movement, uprootedness, are on the increase. The plight of more and more



people is not merely that they are removed from their ancestral home, but that they have no home at all. A clergyman said to a young couple, "I hope you have found a home." They replied, "We were born in a hospital. We were educated in boarding schools. We courted in an automobile, were married in a courthouse, and will be buried from a funeral parlor. What we're looking for is a garage." Without doubt, the world will beat a pathway not to the door of the man who makes a new mousetrap, but to the door of a man with an apartment to let. That is why you will find such family reunions as this multiplying. People have got to have a home. If they can't live in a home, they must have the image and memory of a home to come back to.

I know that when life is too settled and too dull, there are lots of folks who want to be on the move. But, nowadays we are too little settled. Nobody wants to live all his life in an automobile. You may get tired of staying at home, but you'll get much more tired if you have no home to stay in. Therefore, as a general goal of society for average humanity, we should as a nation seek a more settled life and direct our economic policy towards better and more permanent housing. All municipal interests and institutions, the central functions of community life, including the Church, suffer today from the fact that people do not stay long enough in sufficient numbers in any one place to acquire a responsible interest; and everything that can rebuild the love of place and the sense of kin, and give opportunity and scope for settled community life,

is of first importance to the future stability of the country.

There is only one thing more I would like to touch on. It has to do with the total rebuilding of a shattered world. It must already have occurred to you as something implicit in this gathering. We are German folk. Our names attest it. Pennsylvania was a refuge and a place of opportunity for people of German speech and blood. They were kindly, God-fearing, Bible-reading folk, with a love of freedom and a great tolerance. They believed in liberal education. They believed in liberty. They came here to have it and to propagate it. What has happened to the German people? The men who set out to enslave the world, to mechanize humanity, to make a soulless machine civilization, to make of blood and soil not the kindly, humane sentiment that brings us here, but a monstrous debasing of humanity and a monstrous instrument of arrogance and cruelty,—they were men of German blood and German speech, too. What happened? Political and economic circumstances, yes,—at least, so it was said. But what happened was the invasion of a diabolical idea that made a whole people bitter and paranoiac. We who were born in Pennsylvania, with our heredity, are in a better position than others to estimate more fully and more tragically the terrible nature of that transformation. If it happened to them, it can happen to us. Americans are not more freedom-loving today, more religious, more tolerant, than Matthias Smyser and the immigrants who were his contemporaries. It can happen to us unless we beware of the virus of

arrogance and self-sufficiency, the virus of a false philosophy and a false interpretation of history that brings the same disease wherever that virus lodges. And, on the other hand, since we know what our ancestors were, we know that what has happened abroad need not have happened. Matthias Smyser and his heroic mother, and all the people who came to make Pennsylvania a place of peace and kindness, are the proof that neither Germans nor Russians, nor Japanese nor English, nor Americans, nor any kind of men, are born to be nazis and Jew-baiters and the hideous masters of concentration camps. It is a thing that can be fought in man himself, in his soul, here and in America. Maybe the world will end in a fatal blaze of splitting atoms. But it does not have to. The fate is not determined. There is a way to stop it. Allow me to read you a bit of a book that has greatly impressed me, and which perhaps many of you have read. It is, "The White Tower." Here is the passage, and you will know and feel that it is a parable for all of us. There are six people preparing to climb a great mountain in the Alps. Two of them, a man and a girl, are discussing whether one of the six, a German officer, should be a member of the party. The girl, an Austrian refugee, is unwilling to accept him because he is an enemy. The man, an American flying officer, replies:

"Here and now he's a man who wants to climb a mountain. He's one of six people who want to climb a mountain and who're climbing it together because they can't climb it alone."

ANNIVERSARY POEM . . . . . *William C. Busser*, author

Read by Miss MINNIE MARIE ALTLAND<sup>1</sup>

Gathered here on this occasion  
Set to mark two hundred years,  
Members of the Smyser kinship  
Greet the day with song and cheers.

Here's a story, full of glory,  
Rich in deeds the daring do;  
Here's a tale to tell your children  
How a family grew and grew.

How a woman, strong and fearless,  
Braved the wide, tempestuous sea  
To embark for strange and new lands  
Where the spirit could be free.

Wise in all the ways of living,  
Versed in all home-making arts,  
One of many noble women  
With brave pioneering hearts.

Many years have come and vanished  
Since she laid her burdens down,

<sup>1</sup> Minnie Marie Altland, A.B., Elizabethtown College, M.A., Columbia University, daughter of Elmer Altland and his wife, Elizabeth Hubley, who was a daughter of Henry Hubley and his wife, Sarah Elizabeth Spangler, who was a daughter of John Spangler and his wife, Catherine Eyster, who was a daughter of George Eyster, who was a son of John Peter Eyster, who was a son of George Eyster, who was a son of Christian Eyster (Oyster) and Margaretta Smyser, the immigrant.



While her numerous descendants  
Lived their lives of rich renown.

Lives of romance, toil and striving  
In the piping times of peace,  
Sharing in their country's riches  
As they helped it to increase.

Some were merchants, some mechanics,  
Some were bankers, lawyers, teachers,  
Some were judges, some were statesmen,  
Some were farmers, doctors, preachers,

Some were even forty-niners,  
Some helped open up the West,  
Some there were who sought adventure  
In the way that they loved best.

And when war's grim-visaged presence  
Cast a gloom across the land,  
Eagerly they served their country  
In the ranks and in command,

To safeguard our way of living,  
To defend our freedom, too,  
To insure for those who follow  
Equal rights for all of you.

Like America, you're growing,  
But in more than mere addition,  
In the best ancestral manner,  
In the blessed old tradition,

You are housewives, workers, mothers,  
Teaching youth to rise and shine  
And to honor their forefathers  
Of the famous Smyser Line.

You are sowing seeds of wisdom  
In the meadows of the mind,  
Better ways to truth and knowledge  
You are seeking hard to find.

So the story keeps unfolding  
Through the ages, year by year,  
Toil and trouble, love and laughter,  
We all share who linger here.

Now to Anna Barbara Schmeisser  
Here is rendered just acclaim;  
Her descendants and her good deeds  
All rise up to bless her name.

Hosts ancestral of the living  
Rest beneath the silent sod,  
Who ne'er faltered in devotion  
To their Country and their God.

PRESIDENT McCLELLAN:

It is time for the meeting to formally adjourn, but before doing so, I want to call your attention to the notices on the program and hope that many of the Smysers will remain.

I want to thank the speakers who have come long distances to be with us today; the committees and

individuals who have made the arrangements. Special recognition should go to Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Smyser Cannon for their untiring efforts.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. George Hay Kain presented the following motion:

“I move you, sir, that this meeting do now adjourn to meet in the month of May, 2045, with power in the chairman to call earlier meetings, if he so desire.”

The motion was unanimously carried.

SINGING . . . . . “*God be with You till we meet Again.*”

“STAR SPANGLED BANNER” . *Played by Spring Garden Band,*  
The audience uniting in singing the first stanza.

BENEDICTION . . . . . *Rev. Gerald G. Neely,*  
(Pastor Christ Lutheran Church, York, Pa., of which members of the  
Smyser Family were among the founders.)





# APPENDICES



APPENDIX A  
*The Smyser Organization*

1946 OFFICERS

*President*

WILLIAM S. McCLELLAN

*Honorary Vice-Presidents*

IRENE E. LAUCKS

FRANCIS P. SMYSER

*Vice-Presidents*

MAURICE B. SMYSER

WILLIAM J. SMYSER, JR.

RAYMOND S. NEIMAN

JACOB M. SMYSER

SADIE M. MOTTER (Mrs. Robert L.)

ROMAN J. SMYSER

JACOB HAY IV

*Secretaries*

LANDON C. REISINGER

SARAH E. SMYSER

VIOLET LEWIS MEN'OUGH (Mrs. Luther D.)

*Treasurers*

RALPH SMYSER CANNON

EARL C. SMYSER

COMMITTEES

*Publicity*

JOSEPH L. ROSENMILLER }  
PHILIP R. SMYSER } *Co-chairmen*

WILLIAM H. KAIN

HENRIETTA BILLMEYER SHENBERGER (Mrs. Charles A.)

MINNIE MARIE ALTLAND

JACOB HAY IV

*Finance*

CLARENCE H. SMYSER, *Chairman*

H. SMYSER BAIR

LOUISE SPAHR DEANE (Mrs. Philip B.)

HARRY S. EBERT

FRANK A. EYSTER

SARAH KLINEFELTER HOOBER (Mrs. John A.)

CLAIR SMYSER KAUFFMAN

DAVID M. MYERS

W. F. O. ROSENMILLER

DAVID W. SMYSER

CHARLES S. WEISER

WILLIAM O. THOMPSON

*Publication*

GEORGE HAY KAIN, *Chairman*

HAMILTON MARTIN SMYSER

MINNIE MARIE ALTLAND

ELIZABETH SMYSER HESSEMER (Mrs. Fritz M.)

GEORGE HAY KAIN, JR.

MARGARET SMYSER CRANE

*Building and Grounds*

WILLIAM O. THOMPSON, *Chairman*

DAVID M. MYERS

H. SMYSER BAIR

IRWIN H. SMYSER

FRED L. SMYSER

FRANK A. EYSTER



*Hospitality*

ELEANOR WILLIAMS BILLMEYER (Mrs. William B.),  
*Chairman*

LOUISE SPAHR DEANE (Mrs. Philip B.)

MARY OSWALD SPONSLER (Mrs. Charles V.)

MARY SMYSER STOVER (Mrs. Irwin)

ALVERTA JACOBS SMYSER (Mrs. William A.)

ANNIE SMYSER BRUNHOUSE (Mrs. Frederick W.)

GRACE SMYSER BROWN (Mrs. Albert)

EDITH BEARD CANNON (Mrs. Ralph S.)

SARA RUTH KAIN (Mrs. George Hay, Jr.)

EMILY ALLEN KAIN (Mrs. William H.)

ANNA BAHN WOLF (Mrs. George H.)

MARY JANE SMYSER WOGAN (Mrs. William W.)

MARY CONLEY SMYSER (Mrs. Harry C.)

SUSAN CROLL LEBER

SUE LIST BARNITZ

BERTHA SMYSER

CLARA GABLE SMYSER (Mrs. Matthias)

ANNA OSWALD RICHARDSON (Mrs. Philip R.)

LUCY E. SMYSER

ELIZABETH BRUNHOUSE SMYSER (Mrs. Maurice B.)

JOSEPHINE NILES MCCLELLAN (Mrs. William S.)

SYLVIA YOUNG HAY (Mrs. Jacob, IV)

ELSIE MORRIS SMYSER (Mrs. Lewis)

MARGARET SMYSER COCKLEY (Mrs. Donald)

KATIE MALEHORN FICKES (Mrs. Erney)

*Exhibits*

LOUISE SPAHR DEANE (Mrs. Philip B.), *Chairman*

ELEANOR WILLIAMS BILLMEYER (Mrs. William B.)

EDITH BEARD CANNON (Mrs. Ralph S.)

FLORENCE J. NEIMAN (Mrs. Raymond S.)

*Program*

RALPH S. CANNON, <i>Chairman</i>	RAYMOND S. NEIMAN
WALTER S. BOND	WILLIAM J. SMYSER, JR.
JACOB M. SMYSER	JACOB HAY IV
EARL P. SMYSER	ROMAN J. SMYSER
MAURICE B. SMYSER	

*Round-Up*

EARL C. SMYSER, <i>Chairman</i>	KENNETH WAUGHTEL
WILLIAM A. SMYSER	PERCY J. SMYSER
VIRGINIA SMYSER COOK )	JOHN C. MOTTER, JR.
(Mrs. Ernest Edward, Jr.	CARL R. MAY
KENNETH SMYSER	ELWOOD SMYSER
CARL Z. SMYSER	WILLIAM W. WOGAN
JACOB SMYSER	WILLARD SMYSER
FRED LARSON	WILLIAM E. WENTZ
DANIEL SWILER SMYSER	CLAIR SMYSER KAUFFMAN
THOMAS SMYSER	RICHARD SMYSER
HENRY FLORY	HOWARD A. OVREMILLER
PHILIP SMYSER	FRED E. SMYSER
FRANCIS J. SMYSER	

*Ushers*

EARL C. SMYSER	PHILIP SMYSER
WILLIAM A. SMYSER	PERCY J. SMYSER
KENNETH SMYSER	WILLARD SMYSER
FRED LARSON	CLAIR SMYSER KAUFFMAN
DANIEL SWILER SMYSER	RICHARD SMYSER
FRED E. SMYSER	

## RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES

*of Ralph Smyser Cannon, Treasurer of the  
Bicentennial Meeting*

*of the SMYSER SOCIETY IN AMERICA*

HELD JUNE 22, 1946, *at the*

YORK FAIR GROUNDS, YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

## RECEIPTS

34 Underwriters at \$25.00 each . . . . .	\$ 850.00
Miscellaneous Donations . . . . .	768.25
Suppers engaged and paid in advance . . . . .	500.00
	<hr/>
	\$2118.25

## EXPENDITURES

10,000 Stamped Envelopes . . . . .	\$333.20
Trimmer Printing Co., Letterheads . . .	31.75
Rev. Wm. H. Nes, Traveling Expenses	75.00
Lynerd Printing Co., Return Card on Envelopes . . . . .	17.50
Marie S. Gingerich, addressing letters and typing list of descendants . . . . .	164.18
Kyle Printing Co., printing first and second letters and folding them . . .	46.00
Policemen and Car Parkers . . . . .	49.00
Spring Garden Band . . . . .	128.00
C. R. Minnich Sound System . . . . .	50.00
Dunlap Advertising Service, Signs . . .	27.50
John H. Frank, Decorations . . . . .	75.00
Chas. A. Schaefer, Palms and Flowers	34.00
Yorkco Quartette . . . . .	30.00

Lynerd Printing Co., 5000 Programs, 2000 Tickets.....	97.45	
Hanover Evening Sun, advertisement	10.29	
Grace Drayer, stenographer and typist	20.00	
C. W. Simon, photographing.....	75.00	
York County Agricultural Society, preparation of grounds and cleaning	50.00	
Gettysburg Times and News, advertise- ment.....	11.76	
Jones & Co., Costumes.....	14.00	
Florence J. Neiman, expenses to Balti- more.....	6.26	
Stewart & March, hauling boat.....	51.75	
Gazette & Daily, advertising.....	26.35	
Dispatch Publishing Co., advertising..	18.90	
Sundry expenses.....	16.01	
Suppers contracted.....	500.00	
	<hr/>	1958.80
Balance.....		<hr/> \$ 159.35

Respectfully submitted  
RALPH SMYSER CANNON, Treasurer



APPENDIX B  
*The Centennial in 1845*

The following copy of the pamphlet issued in commemoration of the 1845 reunion is inserted as a part of the family record, although much of the Historical Narrative therein included has been superseded by later information. The evident errors and inconsistent spellings have been reproduced.

MINUTES  
OF THE  
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
HELD BY  
THE DESCENDANTS OF  
THE ELDER MATTHIAS SMYSER,  
MAY 3d, 1845,  
On the Farm of  
SAMUEL SMYSER,  
IN  
WEST MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP,  
YORK CO. PA.

YORK: ¶ Printed by STROMAN & WAGNER

1846

69

The design of the following pages is merely to furnish an interesting family document to those who may come after us; and we would recommend to all of the descendants of the elder Matthias Smyser, who have this pamphlet in possession carefully to preserve the same, so that when another hundred years shall have passed by it may still be found, as its pages will doubtlessly then be much more interesting than at the present time, and if such can conveniently do so, would add in manuscript, incidents of their own respective branches, would render it still more interesting.

THE COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE CELEBRATION.

A number of persons having met at the house of HENRY SMYSER, Esq., in the town of York, and all of them being descendants of MATTHIAS SMYSER the elder; the expediency of holding a centennial celebration in honour of their venerated ancestor was suggested, whereupon it was unanimously

Resolved, That it is expedient to hold such a celebration, and that a committee of four be appointed to carry it into effect, the committee having the power to increase its number if necessary.

The following named persons were appointed on said committee, *Joseph Smyser, John Emig, David Smyser,* and Maj. *Geo. Hay.*

A Committee was likewise appointed to prepare Resolutions for the occasion and procure persons to deliver addresses.—The members of this Committee were *Philip Smyser, Rev. S. Oswald,* and *Dr. H. M. M'Clellan.*

## SATURDAY May 3D, 1845.

The morning of this day was unusually fine, and from different sections of the country and from town, might be seen many of the descendants of the above named Mathias Smyser wending their way towards the farm in West Manchester Township, which a century before became the home of their ancestor.

The following are the names of the persons present, which are recorded in the order of their several families:—

Jacob Smyser (of Mich.)	Anna Mary Ebbert
George Smyser	Col. Michl. Ebbert
Margaret Swope	Lydia Ebbert
Jacob Smyser (of Maths.)	Helena Bailor
Elizabeth Smyser	Anna Mary Sell
Michl. Smyser sen.†	George Hoke
Mary Smyser	Susana Hoke
John Emig, sen.	Henry Smyser (of Peter)
Sarah Emig	Adam Smyser
Elizabeth Smyser	Eliza Smyser
Philip Smyser	Ellenora Smyser
Susah Smyser	Joseph Smyser
Henry Smyser	Sarah Smyser
Catherine Smyser	Cath L. E. Smyser
Chas. M. Smyser	Jacob King
Martin Ebbert	Sarah King
Mary Ebbert	Caroline E. King
Henry Ebbert	Wm. S. King
Daniel Ebbert	Arrabella S. King
Adam Ebbert	Geo. Loucks

\* Those marked thus † have since died

Sarah Loucks†  
 Israel Loucks  
 Samuel S. Loucks  
 David Smyser  
 Dr. H. M. M'Clellan  
 C. Louisa M'Clellan  
 Cath. J. M'Clellan  
 Edward S. M'Clellan  
 Edward G. Smyser  
 Sarah Jane Smyser  
 Geo. Philip Smyser  
 Henry M. Smyser  
 Rev. S. Oswald  
 Susan L. Oswald  
 Catha. S. Oswald  
 Anna Maria Oswald  
 Valentine Emig  
 Rebecca Emig  
 Samuel Gross  
 Susan Gross  
 Israel Gross  
 Caroline Gross  
 Michael Hay  
 Alex. Hay  
 Michael Doudle  
 Sarah Doudle  
 Ellen Doudle  
 Anna Maria Doudle  
 Geo. Hay  
 Sarah Gortman  
 Henry Ebber Jr.  
 Sarah Ebbert  
 Charles A. Ebbert  
 Anna Maria E. Ebbert

Daniel Eichelberger  
 Rebecca Eichelberger  
 Martin S. Eichelberger  
 Elizabeth Eichelberger  
 Geo A. Barnitz Esq  
 Maria E. Barnitz  
 Franklin H. Barnitz  
 Michl. D. Barnitz  
 Eliza Smyser  
 Margaret Smyser  
 Ellen Smyser  
 Eliza Smyser  
 Albert Smyser  
 Michael Smyser Jr.  
 Matilda Smyser  
 Rebbecca Smyser  
 Charles Smyser  
 Rev. Charles Hay  
 John Emig Jr.  
 Sarah E. Emig  
 Benjamin Myers  
 Louisa Myers  
 Ellen Myers  
 Mary Diehl  
 Israel Diehl  
 Jeremiah Diehl  
 Sarah A. E. Diehl  
 Elizabeth Brillinger  
 Daniel Smyser (of Peter)  
 Sarah Smyser  
 Amanda Smyser  
 John Brillinger  
 Mrs. Brillinger  
 Eliza Brillinger



Amanda Brillinger	Joanna Baumgardner
Michl. Smyser (of Peter)	Eli Emig
Elizabeth Smyser	Martha Emig
Daniel Smyser	Catharine Hoke
Jacob Smyser	Peter Lint
Wm. Henry Smyser	Elizabeth Lint
Adam Bott	Geo. Wogan
John Eyster Sen.	Margaret Wogan
Elizabeth Eyster	John Smyser Jr. (of Peter)
John Eyster Jr.	Geo. Smyser (of Peter)
Jacob Smyser (of John)	Susanna Smyser
Elizabeth Smyser	Edward Smyser
Elizabeth Bixler	George Smyser

About half past eleven o'clock, the meeting was called to order by Rev. S. Oswald, after which it was organized by the appointment of the following officers:—\*

GEORGE SMYSER, President

JACOB SMYSER (of Mich'l) }  
MARTIN EBBERT, } V. Pres'ts

*Philip Smyser* }  
*S. Oswald* } Secretaries

The officers having been appointed, a recess of about one hour and a half was given, during which time the assembly partook of a sumptuous dinner provided for the occasion. Every thing being in readiness the Presi-

\* The name of Samuel Smyser was omitted from this list and is inserted in some copies of the original pamphlet. G.H.K.

dent again took the chair and after an appropriate prayer by Prof. C. Hay, the venerable chairman addressed the audience in substance as follows:—He said, “That not being a public speaker they could not expect much from him, that he merely wished to thank them for the honor they had conferred upon him in appointing him to preside over them on so interesting an occasion, and to say that he would try to discharge his duty to the best of his ability. I rejoice, said he, in seeing this day, and in being permitted to meet with you—it is a pleasant meeting to me—here I spent my childhood, and here I remember of having seen my grandfather, who took possession of this farm one hundred years ago—since that time great changes have taken place, some of the family have passed through the trying scenes of the Revolution, and others have filled important offices of trust in their time. I rejoice in being able to say that our family has generally been respectable, honest and industrious, and I hope that in all future time it may remain so. To conclude, I would again thank you, friends and brethren, for the honor you have done me in appointing me to preside at this family meeting.”

After the president had taken his seat the following preamble and resolutions were read and adopted:

Whereas, It appears from the deed now held by Samuel Smyser, that our ancestor, Matthias Smyser, became the possessor of the farm on which we are now assembled on the 3d day of May, 1745, and resided here to the day of his death, which occurred on the 12th day of April 1778—and now that we, a portion

of his descendants, by the permission of an all-wise Providence, have met together this day to hold a centennial celebration,—Therefore,

Resolved, That we regard with profound gratitude the interesting privilege which we now enjoy, of meeting together at the homestead of our venerated ancestor, just one hundred years after he became its possessor, and that we humbly and gratefully acknowledge our obligations to God, the supreme disposer of events, for sparing us and permitting us to meet together here at this time.

Resolved, That we respectfully and gratefully cherish the memory of our common ancestor, especially on account of his flying from the civil and religious oppression of his fatherland in early life, and seeking a home and that freedom which he desired, on this Western Hemisphere, and consequently, we, his descendants, have our lots cast in pleasant places and are permitted to breath (*sic*) the air of freedom in a land of Republican Institutions.

Resolved, that we have not come here with selfish views, or merely to eat drink & be merry, but to manifest our grateful respect for the memory of our long since departed ancestor.

*PHILIP SMYSER* then stated to the audience, that the committee appointed to procure some person or persons to address them on the occasion, had fixed upon *DANIEL M. SMYSER*, Esq. of Gettysburg, but remarked that he was sorry to say that he had just received a letter from him stating that he would not be able to be present.

This letter was then ordered to be read, together with another from Peter Diehl, of Oxford—after the reading of these letters it was

Resolved, That they be incorporated in the proceedings of the meeting.

*Letter from D. M. Smyser Esq.*

GETTYSBURG, MAY 1ST, 1845.

*Dear Sir*—I owe you many apologies for not having sooner responded to your kind and very polite invitation to be present at the centenary of our family connection on the 3d inst. at the old homestead near York.

Nothing would afford me more pleasure than to greet so many of my friends who are endeared to me by many ties; and so many others connected by family ties with whom I have never had the pleasure of becoming acquainted. I regret exceedingly that imperative professional duties, compel me to deny myself the pleasure and gratification I had expected to derive from meeting with them and you—our Court is now in session, and will not adjourn until to late on Saturday for me to leave this and reach “head Quarters” in season. I have delayed writing until this late day, because I until to-day clung to the hope that I might still be released in season; but it is now ascertained that this will not be the case; and I am so engaged that I cannot, in duty, leave, before the adjournment.

I beg you to present my cordial good wishes and respectful regards to the assembled clans; and to assure them that should they and I live to greet and celebrate



the next centenary anniversary (*sic*) of our common ancestor, I will most certainly make it a point to be present.

Yours with sincere regard.

DANIEL M. SMYSER

PHILIP SMYSER ESQ.

*Letter from Peter Diehl*

OXFORD MAY 3D, 1845

*Dear Friends:*—Business of an urgent nature prevents me from being with you to-day. Yet be assured that my feelings are enlisted in the celebration and my thoughts, like yours fondly dwell upon the past. Anterior to the revolution our Grandfather came to this country, through the perils of that revolution he passed, and in conjunction with others of that glorious band of stern, unflicking, unyielding patriots aided in transmitting to us the blessings of the government under which we now live, and while your intercourse with each other this day, is bounded within the precincts of friendship and affection, forget not that your hearts also, should be exercised by the delightful emotion of gratitude, to the Divine Giver of those blessings—to him whose fiat holds the destinies of our country, whose protecting power alone can give stability to our institutions. Let your meeting exert an influence so friendly, so great so warm, that it may extend to the remotest members of our families, then will the 3d day of May 1845, be joyfully remembered in years to

come—may nothing occur to mar the concord of the day, is the wish of

Yours, Truly,

PETER DIEHL.

The following Historical Narrative, prepared by Philip Smyser, Esq. was then read by Prof. C. Hay:

“MATHIAS SMYSER, was born in the village of Rugelbach, belonging to the Parish Lustenau, about six miles west of Dunkelsbuhl, in Germany, the 17th February, 1715. Dunkelsbuhl is a considerable town within a few miles of the western boundary of the Kingdom of Bavaria—Rugelbach is situated in the Kingdom of Wortemburg within a few miles of the boundary of which divides that Kingdom from that of Bavaria. Dunkelsbuhl, is nearly in a straight line between Stuttgart and Nuremberg, about 75 miles from the former and about 60 W. S. W. from the latter. The name of the father of Mathias Smyser was Martin and that of his mother Anna Barbara. Of the early history of Mathias or his father Martin, little is known at this day, further than that Martin was a respectable farmer and member of the Lutheran Church, within the above named parish, and that his son Mathias, with his brother George and sister Margaretta, emigrated to America about the year 1738, or probably at an earlier period. Matthias, it seems, was first settled in the neighborhood of Kreutz-creek, in York county, where he followed the weaving business, he soon after took up a large body of land in

the neighborhood of what is now called Springforge, in the same county. It is said that being anxious to get neighbors, Matthias made presents of several farms from his own tract to such as agreed to improve and live on them. Whether his brother George was one of these who received a plantation from him on the same terms mentioned, is not certainly known: but it is known that the two brothers lived neighbors to each other at the above named place, and it is said that Mathias, after some years' residence there found that he had parted with the best portion of his land, & consequently he and his brother sold out, and Mathias purchased a tract of about four or five hundred acres from a Mr. Henthorn, about three miles west of the town of York, to which he removed on the 3d day of May, 1745. On this farm he continued to reside until his death in 1778. His brother purchased a farm somewhere between York and York Haven, where he resided several years, when not pleased with the quality of the land, he sold it and removed to the *Backwoods*, as the west and southwest country were then called, probably to some part of Virginia; from the time of his removal nothing is known to a certainty of him by his relatives in York County. There are, however, Smyers residing in the neighborhood of Lewisville, Ky. (generally farmers) & it is thought that they are descendants of George Smyser, the brother of Mathias. Should this be the fact, it is to be hoped that ere long it may be discovered.

Mathias Smyser left to survive him three sons and six daughters. The names of the sons were, Michael,



Jacob and Mathias, and those of the daughters Dorathy, Sabina, Rosanna, Elizabeth, Anna Maria, and Susanna, whose ages were in the order as above-named. Michael Smyser, the eldest, was born in the year 1740 and died in 1810—Jacob was born 1742 and died 1794—Mathias born 1744 and dies February 1829—Anna Maria the next to the youngest daughter born, 1757 and died 1833—Susanna the youngest born 1760 and died 1840, the ages of the other daughters are not at present ascertained.

Michael Smyser the eldest son was long and extensively known as a highly respectable farmer and tavern-keeper, the owner of a well cultivated farm of about 200 acres, which was cut from a portion of his father's farm. Though not favored with a liberal education, he was known as a man of discriminating mind and sound judgment. He was early associated with the leading Revolutionary patriots of the county & marched to the battle field as Capt. of a company in Col. M. Swope's Regiment, and was one of those who were taken prisoners at Fort Washington, on the Hudson, near the city of New York, on the 16th of November, 1776. In 1778 he was elected one of the members of the House of Representatives in the State Legislature for York County, and from that time to 1790 he was seven times chosen to serve in that capacity. In 1790 and 1794 he was elected to the State Senate, in which capacity he served until 1798. Jacob Smyser the second son of Matthias, was also a respectable farmer, and for some years a Justice of the Peace; in 1789 he was elected to the House of Representatives,



and a few years afterwards died, at the age of 51 years. Matthias Smyser, the youngest of the three sons, resided on the mansion farm of his father, where he quietly pursued the useful and respectable occupation of an agriculturalist, laboring with his own hands for many years; he maintained through the course of a long life the well earned reputation of an honest man of the strictest integrity. In the revolutionary war, he was also in the service for some time, not as a soldier but as a teamster, conducting a baggage wagon, and was throughout a zealous advocate of the whig cause. He lived to be 84 years and some months old, a greater age by several years than any of his brothers or sisters attained.

The descendants of Matthias Smyser the elder, have become very numerous—his oldest son Michael, left three sons and four daughters, viz:—Peter, Elizabeth, Sarah, Jacob, Mary, Michael, and Susan—Jacob his second son, left seven sons and one daughter, viz:—Henry, Jacob, Martin, John, Catharine, Daniel, Peter and Adam. Matthias his third son left five sons & two daughters, viz:—Catharine, Polly, George, Jacob, Matthias, Philip and Henry. His eldest daughter Dorothy, who married Peter Hoke, left four sons and four daughters, viz:—Michael, Glorissa, Catharine, Peter, Jacob, Sarah, Polly and George, Sabina married Jacob Swope & resided in Lancaster county, she left five sons & two daughters, viz:—Jacob, George, Matthias, Emanuel and Frederick. Rosanna was married to George Maul, and resided for some years after her marriage, in the town of York, but afterwards removed with her husband to Virginia, about midway

between Noland's Ferry on the Potomac, and Leesburg in Loudon county, where she died about the year 1796 or 1797, leaving four daughters and one son to survive her, viz—Susan, Catharine, Polly and Peggy—Elizabeth, George and Daniel, having each lived to the age of 20 years and died before their mother, and Peggy and Philip have died since the year 1806. Elizabeth, married to Leonard Eichelberger, resided at the time of her death near Dillsburg in York co., (*sic*) she left four sons, viz:—Jacob, Frederick, George and John, the names of the daughters; four in number, are not now recollected. Anna Maria, married to Martin Ebert, left five sons & three daughters, viz:—George, Martin, Daniel, Adam, Michael, Susan, Helena, and Anna Mary. Susan the youngest daughter, married to Philip Ebert, left one son & four daughters to survive her, viz:—Henry, Elizabeth, Catharine, Lydia, and Sarah: her youngest son died about a year before her, his name was Michael, he resided in St. Lewis, Missouri, where he was engaged as a Merchant at the time of his death; her second daughter, the wife of Henry Small also died about two years before her—Thus we have sixty-four grand sons and daughters of Mathias Smyser the elder, nearly all of whom are now living, and have or have had families, some of them very large, consequently his descendants this day are very numerous.

In April 1839, Mathias Smyser grand son of the subject of this memoir, set out from New York to make a tour through a part of Europe; he was then 56 years of age, and had spent his past life as a farmer

in York County; the main object of his visit to Europe, was to visit the birth place of his grand-father. There was nothing left on record in this country by which the place of his nativity could be traced, save the inscription on his tombstone in the burying ground of the Lutheran Church in the Borough of York,—He sailed from New York for Havre in France, where he arrived in safety—from Havre he went to Paris, thence through the interior of France,—to Geneva—from Geneva his main route was to Lausanna. Bern, Basel, Freybergin the Dukedom of Baden, Strasburg, Baden, Krilsruhe, Stuttgart, Heilbrun, Ochringen, Kreilsheim, to Dunkelshuhl, when he inquired for Ruglebach, and found that he was within six miles of it. This is a small village inhabited by farmers, it has in itself nothing interesting to strangers; but to him who sought it as being the birthplace of his ancestors, it was a spot of intense interest, and was exceedingly gratifying to him. When the house was pointed out to him in which his grandfather was born 124 years previous still known by the name of *Smyser's House*, though its present inhabitants were of a different name—when he beheld this time worn, this humble mansion—when he entered it and felt a consciousness of being within the same walls, probably treading upon the same floor, which more than a century ago was trodden by his grandfather, his gratification, to be known, must be experienced. He called on the present pastor of the parish, the Rev. Sieskind, and made known to him his desire to see his grandfather's name on the baptismal register—the Rev. gentleman



caught at the interesting idea, and eagerly opened the ancient book and commenced the search, but from age and accident the record book was much mutilated and disordered, so that it required many hours diligent search before he found the following interesting record. "Matthias Schmeisser, born the 17th day of February, 1715, son of Martin Schmeisser and his wife Anna Barbara, was bap**t**ized (*sic*) &c. This record agrees precisely with that on his tombstone in America. The minister next led him into the church of the parish and pointed out to him the *taufsteine*, assuring him that according to the unvarying custom, time immemorial, before that stone on that spot his grandfather was baptized. In the register mentioned above and also in that of a village called Dreiber, some miles distance, the name of Schmeisser was very often found. Matthias met with a man named Andrew Schmeisser, at or near Mosbach, who was 67 years of age, with whom he was very much pleased, he saw in him a strong resemblance of his own father, especially when the latter was about the same age, they may have been second cousins, though Andrew had no recollection of hearing that a Matthias Schmeisser had emigrated to America.

The subject of this memoir must have connected himself with the first Lutheran congregation organized in York and its vicinity, soon after his arrival in America, for his name together with that of George Smyser is found among the names of the members of that congregation, which commenced the erection of a church, (a wooden building) in the year 1752, in the grave-yard connected with this church, his



body was interred in 1778, the evidence of which is found on his tombstone. It should have been stated in another place that Margaret the sister of Matthias Smyser who came with him to America, was married to a Mr. Eyster and was the mother of a numerous family; his eldest son Elias, died about the year 1826, aged about 98 years—his sister who was married to a Mr. Sprenkle, also lived to a very great age, something like 90 years. She died a few years before her brother Elias Eyster.

The above historical narration was listened to with much interest, and after some few remarks by the reader, the Rev. S. Oswald was requested to address the meeting. He arose & stated that he did not come there with the expectation of making a speech, that he calculated on seeing others present better qualified than himself to discharge this duty, men who knew more about the history of the Smyser family than he possibly could know, men, said he, whose fondest recollections are centered around this spot where we are now assembled, men who doubtlessly have and now do feel the force of those beautiful lines

“How dear to this heart are the scene of my childhood,  
When fond recollection presents them to view,  
The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wildwood,  
And every loved spot which my infancy knew.”

But as it appears to be the wish of many here present, that I should say something, I present myself before you merely to express my gratification in finding myself amongst you, permit me to assure you, friends and brethren that I shall ever remember this day &

hour as among the happiest days and hours of my life. My thoughts whilst here have been made up of some sort of pleasant mingling together of the past, the present and the future—at one time my imagination carries me back one hundred years—I look up—I look around me—but I see naught save the blue vault of heaven, and a dark, dreary forest, enlivened only by the sweet warbling of the feathered songsters, and the rapid darning of the squirrel among the wide spreading branches of the forest oak—I look again and I see a solitary adventurer firmly treading this thick forest, the sturdy oak falls before the axe, wielded by his vigorous arms; and soon where once that forest stood now waves the golden grain.—But with the rapidity of thought I am brought back to this hour, and here I see a numerous assembly, the descendants of that hardy adventurer congregated to celebrate the day which dates the flight of a century since first he called these lands his own, and to rejoice in the prosperity which we enjoy. Here we may pause for a moment whilst looking at the present, and again think of the days that have been—those dark hours in our country's history, through which our fathers passed, and we would gratefully remember them, especially connected as their memory is with perils by sea and by land, to secure for us their children, the civil and religious freedom which we now enjoy. But when I pass from the present and take a glance into the future, when I think of the rapid flight of time, & then look upon this assembly, the question involuntarily rushes into my mind—who will be here at the end of

another hundred years,—the answer comes with the question—not one of us—we shall all before that time sleep with our fathers, and God grant that we may then together with them breathe the pure atmosphere of Heaven, and eat the fruit of the tree of Life remembering then, that we shall all soon pass from this stage of action, let us at all times cultivate those feelings of friendship and christian fellowship which will unite us in life, in death, and in eternity. With these remarks, said the speaker, I shall close, after reading a letter which had just been handed to me, from the Hon. C. A. Barnitz, addressed to Daniel or Philip Smyser. The letter being read, it was,

*Resolved*, That this meeting thank the Hon. C. A. Barnitz for the interesting information communicated, and that his letter together with the toast, be incorporated in the minutes of our proceedings.

*The following is a Copy of the Letter.*

Daniel or Philip Smyser Esqrs: I take the liberty of sending you a toast, which as coming from a friend, you may offer if you think proper, on the occasion of your interesting family festival.

The Smyser family it is well known—were all and active supporters of the American cause during our revolutionary struggle. Col. Michael Smyser was a useful and leading man in the councils of that day as well as in the field. When the war commenced in 1775 and the port of Boston was closed for the purpose of starving the people of that important place into submission, a committee of twelve citizens of York County was formed for the purpose of affording relief and



encouragement to their distressed brethren of Boston, a sum of near 250 pounds in specie (a large sum at that time) was raised and remitted to John Hancock, who was afterwards president of Congress, with a spirited letter of encouragement to maintain their rights and promises of further assistance. These facts are recorded for the honor of our county, in the American Archives at Washington with the names of the committee.

Michael Smyser was an active and leading member of that committee and remitted as a part of the above sum from Manchester Township £6, 12, 1.

If the American cause had failed, every member of that committee as well as their illustrious correspondent (on whose head a reward was set,) would have forfeited their lives on the scaffold, with all their property.

To all those who in trying and dangerous times thus offered themselves, and all their property as a sacrifice on the altar of their country, all grateful recollections & acknowledgements, are due, not only from their descendants, but from all who live in the enjoyment of those rights and blessings which under Providence they obtained for us.

I offer you this tribute—

The memory of Col. Michael Smyser—The devoted patriot—the faithful friend—the honest man.

*Yours Respectfully*

May 3d, 1845.

CHARLES A. BARNITZ.

Professor C. Hay, then briefly addressed the audience—In his address, he compared the condition of our forefathers before their emigration to this country



with our own at this time—& then gave a description of some German villages which he had seen during his tour in Europe which formed a striking contrast to the smiling scene by which we were then surrounded. Our invaluable civil and religious privileges, that distinguished us so highly above all other nations of the earth were then dwelt upon as having been gained by the blessing of God upon the efforts of our revered ancestors, as calling upon us for sincere gratitude to the giver of all good and claiming our united efforts for their preservation and transmission to our latest posterity.

The speaker having taken his seat, Geo. A. Barnitz Esq. arose and offered the following Resolution which was unanimously adopted.

*Resolved*, That the Secretaries constitute a Committee to arrange for publication in pamphlet form a full account of this meeting, together with such other information as they may be able to gather—and that five hundred copies be printed and distributed among those who are present on this occasion.

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Philip Smyser, Esq., and adopted.

Whereas the birth place of our common ancestor, Mathias Smyser, a village in Germany, was called *Ruegelbach*, therefore

*Resolved*, That this his homestead in America, as the same was in extent on the 3d day of May 1745 be hereafter called RUEGELBACH. It was then

*Resolved*, To adjourn, recommending to our descendants the holding of a similar celebration on the 3d day of May 1945—and further that we entertain the

hope that this homestead of our ancestor will then still be known and held in the name of Smyser.

It was the wish of those present at the celebration that the names of the whole number of the descendants of Mathias Smyser the elder should be inserted in this publication, so far as they could be ascertained; the committee made an effort to do so, and delayed the printing to give time for reports to come in, but the greater portion furnished only the number of the respective branches, so that it is found impracticable to give any thing like a complete list of names, and therefore the committee can only furnish the following which it is believed is a tolerably accurate estimate of the number living on the 3d day of May 1845. We give the names of the above mentioned Mathias Smyser's children, with the number of the descendants of each.—

Descendants of Col. Michael Smyser	244
do Jacob Smyser,	177
do Mathias Smyser,	160
do daughter Dorothy, married to Peter Hoke,	240
do Sabina, married Jacob Swope	54
do Elizabeth, do Leonard Eichelberger	116
do Rosa Anna do George Maul	60
do Anna Mary do Martin Ebbert	64
do Susanna do Philip Ebbert	47
Total	1162

## APPENDIX C

### *Well Known Members of the Smyser Family*

WILLIAM H. KAIN, *Esquire*

of the Committee on Publicity

From the York Dispatch of May 22, 1946

Anna Barbara Schmeisser was a hardy pioneer widow, who dared, in 1731, at the age of 50 years, to travel over 3,000 miles to give her family a new world in which to live. Her journey was not made in vain, for soon the Smyser family took a prominent place in the social, economic, political and even the military progress of the growing nation.

Settling on the family homestead "Ruegelbach," northwest of York, in 1745, her son, Mathias, later took part in the Revolutionary War by conducting one of the 118 wagons York county was called upon to provide after the battle of Germantown when government stores had to be moved west of the Susquehanna river. No doubt his efforts were encouraged by the fact that two of his sons, Jacob Mathias and Mathias Emerick, served as privates. Another son, Colonel John Michael Smyser, not only raised funds for the relief of Boston in 1775, but also served on the field of battle. Both he and his cousin, J. George Eyster, a grandson of Margaret Smyser, were cap-

tured by the British at Fort Washington. After the war the Colonel served in both the state house of representatives and the state senate.

Other members of the family achieving political prominence included Jacob Mathias Smyser, who after returning from the war was elected to the house of representatives, Col. Frederick Eichelberger, assemblyman and later state senator; Adam Eichelberger, sheriff of York county, and General Jacob Eyster of the Pennsylvania militia, who served both as state senator and later as deputy surveyor general of Pennsylvania as well as taking an active part in the War of 1812.

During this war the Smyasers were further represented by George S. Eichelberger, and by Lieutenant George Smyser, who marched to the defense of Baltimore and later became Associate Judge of Adams County. His son, Judge Daniel M. Smyser of Montgomery and Bucks Counties, for a time was a law associate of Thaddeus Stevens and in 1854 was defeated as the Whig candidate for Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

One year later Dr. Henry L. Smyser, who had joined the "forty-niners" of California, went to Europe and served in the Russian army during the Crimean War, winning the Medal of St. Stanislaus.

During the country's next crisis, the Civil War, many members of the family served, including Lieutenant William H. Smyser, one of the members of the York Rifles, Jacob Smyser who was captured and imprisoned in Libby prison, and Michael D. Smyser.



W. A. Eichelberger was a sailor aboard the U. S. S. "San Jacinto" when Captain Wilkes captured Mason and Slidell, the Confederate commissioners then aboard the British ship "Trent," which nearly brought Great Britain into the war on the side of the Confederacy, and General George Hay commanded a brigade of the Eighth Army corps. He had previously served as a committee member for the 1845 Smyser centennial with Philip Smyser, a member of the state legislature and secretary of the committee, and Dr. H. M. McClellan, grandfather of President William S. McClellan of the bi-centennial meeting.

The general's brother, Colonel Alexander Hay, founded the First National bank of York, and was one of the promoters of the Union Pacific Railroad and sole owner of the Washington and Alexandria Railroad. An unsuccessful attempt was made to subpoena him during the Covode investigations of President Buchanan.

In the field of education Dr. Charles A. Hay was a professor at Gettysburg Theological Seminary and president of the Lutheran General Synod, and Professor George W. Gross acted for many years as principal of the York County Academy, while Dr. William Emory Smyser won distinction as Dean of Ohio Wesleyan University.

In civic affairs Ephraim Smyser Hugentugler was active as Mayor of York for several terms. West York was laid out originally as Eberton by Henry Ebert and his brothers, and Smyser Williams was one of York's outstanding attorneys. At least two of York's

major industries were managed by Smyasers. Edward G. Smyser and his sons developed the Variety Iron Works, which was later known as the Smyser-Royer plant. Israel Laucks and his son, S. Forry Laucks, were responsible for the prominence of York Safe and Lock Company.

The family likewise took a full part in the country's recent wars, with perhaps the most interesting episode being Colonel Rudolph E. Smyser's crossing into Mexico after the Mexican rebel, General Pancho Villa.

Today there is hardly a field of importance in which the Smyser descendants have not continued to hold a place of eminence.

## APPENDIX D

### *Exhibit of Heirlooms Display at Martin Library and Historical Society by Members of Smyser Family*

From the York Dispatch of June 18, 1946

A display of heirlooms of the Smyser family, which will hold its bicentennial celebration June 22 at the York Inter-State Fair Grounds is being made at the Martin library and the Historical Society of York County. The exhibits include samplers, drawings, miniatures, photographs, "taufschienne," daguerreotypes, knives, forks and spoons, canes, quilts, footstools, and other articles too numerous to mention. The display, which is really remarkable and sure to attract much attention will remain for the inspection of the public up until the celebration.

The list of exhibits includes:

Samplers.—(Property of Mary Stieg Strickler.) Mary Ann Hoke was the great granddaughter of Mathias Smyser (Mathias I). Work done in 1831 was by Mary Ann Hoke). (Date worked on sampler with name).

Sampler.—(Property of Pauline C. Stieg.) Susanne Hoke was the great-granddaughter of Mathias (I) Smyser.

Susanne Hoke sampler worked in the 12th year of her age, Feb. 20, 1840, appears on this sampler.

Sampler.—Made by Margaret Smyser, 1844, loaned by Raymond Smyser Neiman.

Drawing framed.—Property of Louise Spahr Deane, great-granddaughter of Philip A. Smyser, the artist. Centennial celebration 1845, 3 miles west of York on East Berlin road. Drawn by Philip A. Smyser.

Inscription.—“The above represents the homestead of the older Mathias Schmeisser, who purchased and took possession thereof on the 2nd day of May A. D. 1745 and also represents the centennial celebration held on the ground on the 3rd day of May A. D. 1845 by a portion of his descendants in honor of their venerated ancestor, the said Mathias Smyser, who was born the 19th of February A. D. 1715 in a village called Riegelbach in Germany. In honor whereof his assembled descendents at their centennial celebration, unanimously adopted the following resolution:

“Resolved, that this his homestead in America be henceforth called Riegelbach,” (pronounced Riegelbach—Reegelbach).

The children present enjoyed their various sports in groups, nearly as above represented, though their merry voices and merry modes of amusements cannot be precisely depicted as they were heard and seen and indulged on that happy and interesting occasion.

The above (Riegelbach) House is three miles west from the borough of York, at the road leading from York to Berlin. The house originally was only the middle part of the present one, extending from the



stone part to the north side of the front door along the northern wall, about 10 feet wide the whole depth of the house; the kitchen paved with brick. In 1790 my father built the stone end, divided into rooms below and one above.

About the year 1807 when he quit farming he built the small brick kitchen to the south gable of the stone house which he made his residence during the remainder of his life. About 1818 brother Mathias built an addition of about 14 feet to the north end of the old house and had the whole (which was log) weather boarded and the inside of the old part was remodeled, making it a comfortable dwelling 1856.”

On this same drawing is depicted members of the clan at a dinner table and in front is shown a large basket with a baby (who was Catherine Louisa Elizabeth Smyser), who later became the wife of Dr. Jacob Hay and the mother of Jacob Hay IV.

Also is depicted a likeness of Mathias Smyser who occupied the farm from May 3, 1745 to 1771 when he quit farming but resided on the premises until April 1778 when he died at the age of 63 years, one month and 28 days.

Mathias Smyser, his son, occupied the farm from 1771 to 1806 when he quit farming but resided thereon until Feb. 21, 1829 when he died; aged 84 years, three months and 21 days.

Mathias Smyser, his son, occupied the farm from 1806 until 1840 when he removed to York where he died April 7, 1843, aged 60 years, three months and nine days.

Samuel Smyser is present owner May 3, 1845.

Wool buggy spread from the home of D. Albert Smyser 1851-1931, loaned by Minnie and Elizabeth Smyser.

Towel of Adam Smyser 1801-1888, loaned by Maurice and Elizabeth Smyser.

Pictures of Jacob and Margaretta Yessler Smyser, loaned by Mrs. W. B. Billmeyer.

Wedgewood pitcher belonging to Michael and Eliza Lanius Smyser, loaned by Mrs. W. B. Billmeyer.

History of America, Michael Hoke, grandson of Ann Dorothea Smyser, 1747, loaned by Maurice and Elizabeth Smyser.

Sampler of Louisa, daughter of David Smyser, made in 1846, loaned by Minnie and Elizabeth Smyser.

Miniatures of Philip and Sarah Hoyer Smyser, loaned by Mrs. Louise Spahr Deane.

Silver spoon, owned by Louise Slagle, wife of Mathias Smyser, II.

A Godfrey Lenhart spoon, loaned by Miss Betty Cannon.

Pin and locket, belonging to Margaret Smyser, loaned by Grace Neiman Sonneman.

Ear rings belonging to Margaret Smyser, loaned by Raymond Smyser Neiman.

Daguerrotypes: Margaret Smyser, wife of George Smyser and Elizabeth Loucks Smyser, wife of Michael Smyser, loaned by Raymond Smyser Neiman.

Birth certificate of David Smyser, loaned by Marina and Elizabeth Smyser.

Photograph of Elizabeth Loucks Smyser, wife of Michael Smyser and daughter of Jacob and Margaret Loucks, loaned by Raymond Smyser Neiman.

Collar worn by Margaret Smyser, wife of George Smyser, loaned by Dr. Raymond Smyser Neiman.

Silver spoons, belonging to Elizabeth Loucks Smyser, wife of Michael Smyser, loaned by Dr. R. S. Neiman.

Silver spoons belonging to Margaret Smyser, wife of George Smyser, loaned by Dr. R. S. Neiman.

Daguerrotype about 1839 of Edward G. Smyser son of Philip Smyser, loaned by Mrs. Louise Spahr Deane.

Photograph—Michael Smyser, 1790–1868, second child of Peter Smyser and Barbara Wolf, the husband of Elizabeth Loucks. Loaned by Dr. R. S. Neiman.

“Taufschein” belonging to Anna Marie Smyser (Polly), daughter of Mathias Smyser, II, who married John Emig, loaned by Berdella Witmer Snyder.

Daguerrotypes: Jacob Smyser and brother, loaned by Mrs. George Osborne, Westminster, Md.

Knives and forks, with bone handles, belonging to Jacob Smyser 1776–1855, loaned by Maurice and Elizabeth Smyser.

Cradle—mother of Mrs. Jacob Hay, Catherine Louise Elizabeth Smyser, wife of Dr. Jacob Hay and mother of Jacob Hay.

Drawings of Mathias III, owner of the homestead, born Dec. 29, 1782 and died April 7, 1843, age 60 years three months nine days.

Father—Mathias, II, owner of the homestead “Reigelbach.”

George Smyser, appointed president centennial celebration 1845, died Oct. 5, 1857 age 83 years three months 23 days.

Philip Smyser—artist, born 1863.

Miniature—Philip Smyser, wife Sarah Hoyer Smyser.

Sampler, (property of Louise Spahr Deane) “Sarah Jane Doudell, wife of Edward G. Smyser” (name, town and date appears) “York, March 16, 1830” also appears two quotations carefully worked. “Honor thy father and thy mother and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” “She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands.”

Sampler; (property of Mrs. Violet Lewis Menough) “Margaret Ann Menough, daughter of Mr. James K. and Ann M. Menough, age 12 years, Paradise township, York county, Nov., 1842. “Remember now thy creator.”

Cane: (property of Mrs. Louise Spahr Deane) Philip Smyser’s cane.

Quilt—by Amanda Smyser 1857–1920, loaned by Mrs. Annie Brunhouse.

Foot stool—belonging to Margaret Smyser 1826, loaned by Dr. R. S. Neiman.

In addition to the foregoing articles there were on exhibition a trunk hollowed out of a log which by family tradition was brought over on the Britannia by the Smyser family in 1731 together with a cant-hook which is also reputed to have been so brought. On this there is scratched the date 1729. These articles are in the possession of The Historical Society of York County. The Society is also in possession of drafts for several tracts of land mentioned in the Introduction.



## APPENDIX E

### *Smyser Bibliography*

Minutes of the Centennial Celebration, held by the descendants of the Elder Matthias Smyser, May 3rd, 1845, on the farm of Samuel Smyser, in West Manchester Township, York County, Pennsylvania. (York Printed by Stroman & Wagner, 1846—16 x 10½ cm., wrappers, pp. 20.)

The foregoing is reprinted above as Appendix B

*Same title.* Carlisle Pennsylvania. Printed by Abraham Rudisill, 1852. (16 x 10½ cm., wrappers, pp. 26, p. 25 numbered 44 and page 26 numbered 00). Contains appendix with data as to the Rudisill and allied families.

*Same title.* No place, no date. (Title page of 1846 issue.) 16 x 10½ cm., wrappers, pp. 24. (Prepared by Mrs. Catherine L. E. (Smyser) Hay.) Contains appendix with data as to the Koppenhoefer family. Reprinted in the Xanders volume.

*Same title.* Compiled by Manervia F. (Rudisill) Smyser and her son Percy J. Smyser. Typewritten by Matilda J. Smyser, York, Pennsylvania, 1941. Printed by Kyle Printing Company, York, Pennsylvania,

1941. Title page of 1852 issue, with above data on last page. (17½ x 10½ cm., binders boards, pp. 30 plus 32 blank. Re-issue of 1852 edition, with further data on the Rudisill and allied families.

History of the Smyser Family in America, September 1731—September 1931. By Amanda Lydia Laucks—Xanders. (28½ x 22 cm., Boards, pp. 260. Privately printed (York, 1931).

The Historical Society of York County is in possession of three manuscripts which may well be added to the Smyser Bibliography. They are:

A subscription list "for the purpose of defraying the Expences of providing a suitable entertainment" for the Centennial Celebration of 1845 signed by 23 persons, who subscribed \$31.00;

A subscription list to purchase the excess 300 copies of the 500 Centenary Pamphlets, 200 having been distributed to those who were in attendance at the reunion.

An "Account Book Showing the Amount of Money Received & Paid out for The Centennial Celebration May 3d 1845 . . . " showing receipts of \$93.90 and expenditures of \$85.00.

## APPENDIX F

### *The German Parish Records*

The following are in some instances transcripts, and in other instances summaries, of various German Parish Records secured some years ago by Hamilton Martin Smyser and his sister, Margaret Smyser Crane, together with an attempt at a modern translation of the curious old German phraseology. This information from these almost inaccessible, and possibly now destroyed records, is given in the hope that it may furnish a starting point for future genealogists.

For the same reason, there is included information from the Records of the Reverend John Casper Stoeber who served the York territory as minister for a number of years, but whose records are not available in York. No effort has been made to examine the records of the various York County Churches, as that is a work for the genealogist rather than for the historian.

PARENTS OF MARTIN, father of the three immigrant children.

#### *Mosbach Records*

Anno 1719. Trieber, den 27. Febr. ist Andreas Schmeisser, Dinkelsbühlischer Bauer and Hauptmann, mit einer Leichenpredigt beerdigt worden aetatis 66 Jahr.

1719. Trieber. On the 27th of February, Andreas Schmeisser, Dinkelsbühl farmer and captain, was buried with a funeral sermon; 66 years old.

Anno 1729. Trieber, den 13. Marty ist Anna, Andreas Schmeissers ehemaligen Dinkelsbühlichen Hauptmanns allda hinterlassene Wittwe, mit einer Leichenpredigt beerdiget worden aetatis 75 Jahr.

1729. Trieber. On the 13th of March, Anna, widow of Andreas Schmeisser, Dinkelsbühl captain, was buried, aged 75 years, with a funeral sermon.

The maiden name of Anna (Maria) is not known.

The children of Andreas and Anna Maria were:

1678—September 21 (?), Andreas, (died July 9, 1745);

1680—October 14, MARTIN;

1682—March 25, Georg;

1684—January 30, Matthaüs;

1686—November 24, Anna;

1688—February 4, Georg (died August 22, 1727);

1691—June 8, Maria;

1695—December 24, Eva.

The record of Martin's birth is:

Anno 1680. Trieber, den 14. Octobris ist Martinus, Andreas Schmeissers Bauers zu Trieber mit Maria seinem Eheweib erzeugten Sohnlein, geboren eod. die getauft und von Peter Lehrer Bauers zu Langensteinbach in die Pfarr Seegring gehörig bei der heiliger Tauf versprochen worden.



1680. Trieber, 14 October, Martin, small son of Andreas Schmeisser, farmer, of Trieber, and Maria, his wife, is born and the same day baptized with Peter Lehrer, farmer, at Langensteinbach in the Parish of Seegring, his godfather in holy baptism.

FATHER OF ANNA MARIA BARBARA, the immigrant widow-mother.

*Dinkelsbühl Records*

1706. Den 12. December, Dominica 2. Adventi, ist Maister Johann Georg Kucher, Müller auf der Rothmühle, nachdem er ganzer 16 Wochen in der Wassersucht schwerlich danieder gelegen, mit einer Leichenpredigt *ex Genesis* 49, 32: Und da Jakob vollendet—Volk, und andern Leichenseremonien zu Erden bestättigt worden, seines Alters 53 Jahr wenig 17 Tag.

1706. On the 12th of December, the second Sunday of Advent, Master John George Kucher, miller of the Red Mill, after suffering for 16 weeks from the dropsy (and dying of it!), was interred with a funeral sermon on the text Gen. xlix, 32: And then Jacob fulfilled . . . folk, and with other funeral rites, after 53 years less 17 days of life.

MARTIN MARRIES ANNA MARIA BARBARA KUCHER

1710. Den 6. Mai ist Martin Schmeisser, ledigen Stands, angehender Bauer und Dinkelsbühlischer Unterthan zu Riegelbach, Andreas Schmeissers Bauers und Dinkelsbühlischen Unterthans zu Tribur

eheleiblicher Sohn, mit Maria Barbara, weiland Maisters Johann Georg Kuchers gewesenen Müllers auf der Rothmühle selig nachgelassene Tochter, nach dreimalige öffentliche Proclamation mit einer Hochzeit predigt *absque omni impedimento* in hiesiger Kirchen copuliert worden.

1710. On the 6th of May, Martin Schmeisser, bachelor, a novice farmer and subject of Dinkelsbühl at Riegelbach, son of Andreas Schmeisser, farmer and subject of Dinkelsbühl at Tribur, was married in the local church with full service *absque omni impedimento* after threefold public proclamation (of banns), to Maria Barbara, orphaned daughter of the late Master Johann Georg Kucher, one-time miller of the Red Mill.

MARTIN'S CHILDREN are born.

1711. Den 22. Martii Dom. Judica ist ANNA MARGARETHA, Martin Schmeisser Bauers und Dinkelsbühlischen Unterthans zu Riegelbach und Anna Barbara seine Hausfrau neugeborenes Töchterlein, getauft und von Anna Margaretha, Andreas Hofackers Bauers und hochadelich Schollischen Unterthans zu Braeunersberg Hausfrau, in der Taufe versprochen worden.

1711. On the 22d of March, The Sunday of Judica, Anna Margaretha, new-born daughter of Martin Schmeisser, farmer and subject of Dinkelsbühl at Riegelbach, and of his wife, Anna Barbara, was baptized, the godmother being Anna Margaretha, wife of Andreas Hof-

facker, farmer and honorable subject of Schöll at Braeunersberg.

*Rügelbach Records*

- 1714—January 20, a son, Andreas, born to Martin  
“farmer” and “Maria Barbara, his wife;”  
1715—February 17, a son, MATTHIAS;  
1717—April 2, a son, Georg;  
1719—Sunday before February 20, a son, Andreas  
(died September 22, 1721);  
1721—June 15, a son, GEORG.

*The Stoever Records*

These records, published as “Records of Rev. John Casper Stoever Baptismal and Marriage 1730–1779” Harrisburg, Pa.: Harrisburg Publishing Co. 1896, show that on August 2, 1738, Mr. Stoever married Matthias Smyser and “Catharina Koppenhoefer” at Lebanon.

On May 22, 1740, he married John George Smyser and Barbara Stambach at “Codus.”

On November 25, 1740, he baptized “John Michael Schmeisser,” born November 21, 1740, a son of Mattheis Schmeisser, at Codorus, the sponsors being “John George Schmeisser” and his wife, Barbara.











